Strategies for Coping with the Challenges Under the Background of Content-Based Instruction Across the Critical Thinking and Motivational Challenges

Ming Chen[(✉)]

Department of Foreign Languages, Guangzhou Nanfang University, Guangzhou, China
chenm200024@stu.nfu.edu.cn

Abstract. Content-based Instruction (CBI) is one of the effective teaching approaches which aims to develop and cultivate students' language and academic skills. The discussion of coping mechanisms of CBI against the backdrop of critical thinking and motivational issues is both theoretically relevant and practically useful. Therefore, the study aims to summarize some strategies for improving students learning motivation and critical thinking in the context of CBI through some relevant literature. The contribution of this paper is that the strategies in this paper can inspire future teachers to enhance students' language learning motivation and critical thinking.

Keywords: Content-based Instruction · Motivation · Critical thinking · Strategies

1 Introduction

Many teachers who use CBI as a teaching method regard the difficulty in interacting with students and the inability to improve students' learning motivation as one of the major puzzles in their teaching experience. Through the use of real language resources and a meaningful learning process, CBI helps students develop into self-sufficient individuals with the capacity to continue learning even when they are outside of the classroom [1]. However, CBI teaching requires students to master both the content of the subject and language, which may be a big challenge for students to be motivated and active in subject and language learning [2]. It is found that students who are lacking in motivation and the skills of thinking and learning can be an obstacle to understanding the course content [3]. Therefore, it is particularly meaningful for teachers to lead students to overcome the problem, especially under the background of CBI, which is content oriented. According to Liu's studies, pupils with anxiety and low motivation are less likely to interact with professors in class and find it challenging to develop critical thinking, which will negatively impact the effects of language acquisition [4]. On the contrary, motivation is seen as the core of learning, which can promote the learning process and enable students to gain achievement by actively generating a desire for knowledge [5]. Hence, a lot of

research has been done to address this issue. The paper intends to summarize some strategies that can be helpful for teachers to cope with the challenge under the background of Content-based Instruction across critical thinking and motivational challenges.

2   Motivation

Less attention has been paid to how the educational environment affects students who regard English as their second language but are forced to take English classes because of social needs and future requirements, which has puzzled the students for a long time. Therefore, according to many academics, teachers should employ efficient and effective teaching techniques to help pupils develop a positive attitude toward language learning and a strong sense of motivation, both of which are crucial for language learning [6]. The majority of pupils who speak English as a second language are raised in homes with minimal opportunities to use it [7]. As a result, they struggle to keep up with the courses of CBI, which lowers their drive to learn and makes them afraid to talk to their peers and teachers in class. In the context of CBI, students are likely to lose confidence and motivation in learning since the difficulties that students meet and the phenomenon that they cannot find an interest in learning, such as sleeping in class, wandering off, or just staring into space. Therefore, specific strategies based on the teaching background of CBI are proposed to improve students' learning motivation.

Firstly, the teaching plan should be made according to the language needs of students, and authentic language materials are also supposed to be properly applied to better improve their enthusiasm. The survey shows that most of the students expect that teachers can adopt different teaching methods flexibly to create a relaxed and active classroom atmosphere and emphasize more on the practicality of English [8]. Students are the main character of the class, and the curriculum arranged by the teacher should match the needs of the students. Teachers need to take the practical application of language into account and reproduce the original scene. Scenes that correspond to real life will enhance students' interests. Since kids are the future explorers and practitioners, the pertinent literature suggested that genuine language materials can help students develop their imagination and capacity to recreate real situations.

In addition, these authentic materials bring students into an environment where they can communicate with others outside the classroom, which can increase the practicality and participation of the language in order to promote students' interests and motivation in language learning. The implementation of CBI allows students to become active and motivated in the classroom by using targeted and on-site language materials so that students can be more independent and confident. Also, students have the chance to learn from a range of perspectives through various channels because of meaningful real-world materials and activities, which improves their interaction and cooperation. By combining content and language, students can use the materials they learn from the class to apply their input to daily life after class. This high application greatly enhances their sense of achievement and motivation [9]. Secondly, the course material needs to reflect the interests of the pupils. CBI is content-oriented, which enables students to learn things through vivid content that is interesting or meaningful to them. Therefore, the content of the course should not only contain language knowledge but also adapt to students'

various interests. If the interest is related to the content, it will be easy to arouse students' desire to learn and balance their schedule time for study and entertainment.

Thirdly, the curriculum should include challenging learning assignments. Students' attention might be drawn to learning activities when they are given fascinating and difficult tasks. They will experience a sense of accomplishment when they complete difficult activities and ultimately succeed, which motivates them [10].

A teacher full of enthusiasm can meet the common needs of different students, which can strengthen the learner's learning motivation. In addition, teachers' attitudes towards each student also have a great impact on learners. If teachers can devote everything to students' learning, love their career enough, and devote themselves to teaching, they will help learners arouse their enthusiasm for learning. On the contrary, if the teacher is imparting knowledge without any emotion and teaching enthusiasm, the classroom will be completely silent, which will greatly weaken students' enthusiasm and the learning motivation of the learners. The study claims that pupils may perceive intuitive feelings teachers bring and that teachers can easily motivate students to learn. Their interests and the content will be affected most by the teacher's classroom environment. Students will evaluate whether these classes can meet their needs. Therefore, teachers should use more flexible teaching methods to liven up the classroom atmosphere so as to make students full of energy and improve their learning motivation [6].

To sum up, improving students' learning motivation in the context of CBI is a key point that can promote the learning process. In order to help students overcome the difficulties, using authentic language materials, matching the course content and students' interest, assigning tasks that are full interesting and challenging, and building more enthusiasm through some specific classroom teaching methods, which are effective teaching strategies that can be used by teachers.

3   Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the core competency in creativity and innovation [11]. Nowadays, schools are promoting innovative thinking. However, students' thinking is not active, and the inertia of class mode limits students' critical thinking. Therefore, it is necessary to put forward some measures to improve students' critical thinking.

Teachers play an important role in the development of students in English teaching. In order to improve students' critical thinking under the background of developing innovative education, teachers should fully consider the pre-class syllabus, teaching instruction during the class, and assessment mode after class [12]. For instance, class objectives should be built using the basis of CBI. Teachers can expand the variety of the curriculum setting. In the past, the customary language courses consisted of listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, etc. However, some courses, such as comparing pictures and expressing the opinion about work should be constructed to arouse students' imagination. In addition, classroom instruction should be designed accurately, and students should be encouraged to answer questions after the group discussion. Teacher-oriented courses are currently the common classroom instruction, which means that students do what the teacher asks them to do without any thinking.

However, the most important part of the background of CBI, is "learning by doing." English teachers should involve learners in communication, such as sharing ideas related

to the content of the class or dividing the class into several groups to debate or corporate with each other [12]. Moreover, the after-school examination should be expanded. Also, critical thinking should be incorporated into the important assessment criteria, such as an oral report, speech contests and debate competitions, etc. [11].

In addition, debate is a good way to improve students' critical thinking. More and more debate competitions should be held to expose students to more debate environments. Teachers can use the method of debate in several steps. Firstly, guide students to analyze the topic, decide on their own views and positions, and then build a logical framework for their arguments, such as opinions, arguments, refutations, conclusions. Secondly, the teacher evaluates the work done by students and gives suggestions. Finally, students should be required to write the instructions and procedures of the whole debate process completely and deeply. In the feedback of the interview with the students, the following conclusions are summarized: the students described the debate process as meaningful and entertaining in their reflections on their debate learning experience. This not only got people fired up and involved in the contentious discussion, but it also helped them see things from other people's points of view and arguments, which improved the way they constructed their arguments and significantly enhanced their command of the English language.

Admittedly, students also encountered some problems in the debate, including the lack of background knowledge resulting in insufficient arguments and easy to be refuted by the other side, the lack of certain logic and analysis ability in the debate process, and the problem in language level resulting in the debate jam, fluency and so on. Teachers should help students solve the problem in various ways, such as giving students enough time to gather background information before the debate and providing students with some frameworks to seek knowledge. Homework can improve students' logic by speaking and writing, commenting on articles, and expressing ideas. At the same time, students should also pay attention to the accumulation of English language foundations.

All in all, the students' words indicate that they are satisfied with the debate teaching and hope to use it more in the future to get various details and steps from the teacher to improve their critical thinking. Experimental studies have shown that students taught in a debate-driven way have better critical thinking skills than students taught in a traditional way [13].

In addition, relevant data analysis shows that animated videos related to the topic can enrich various language learning materials for students. Strong visual imaging, which shows different phenomena, can improve the teaching quality, imagination, and critical thinking of students based on the background of CBI. Students' ability to acquire critical thinking abilities in their academic work is made simple by the use of video animation training, as shown by the adaptable solutions to academic challenges. According to the data, pupils may successfully apply the material they acquired in the animation movie in their daily lives. The pupils' ability to describe the underlying issue and create a well-organized solution strategy based on the video animation teaching is the clearest example of this. Without the concern and guidance of teachers and leaders in the planning and implementation process, students can logically plan out all possible emergencies and also new ideas generated in the normal process. Since the animation video can leave a deep impression on students, they can memorize almost the whole problem-solving

process learned in the video. Group discussion among classmates will be required, and each of them gives different methods related to the problem that they face.

Finally, it is necessary to summarize a final conclusion and share it with other groups in class. The use of animation videos also enables students to acquire a wide range of knowledge and relevant materials in the process of finding and solving problems, which is conducive to their learning and the cultivation of active thinking. The authenticity of animation is easier to be applied to practice than the theoretical nature of books, which can enrich students' practical experience. The improvement of critical thinking also improves students' flexibility in practice to some extent. Previous research comparing video animation and text forms has shown that the former can increase students' critical thinking skills, strengthen their understanding and meet their needs. Therefore, video animation that is related to the topic is more effective in promoting students' critical thinking than textbooks and videos without learning content.

With the development of technology, a more adaptable way for students to participate in learning activities is through video. Videos can be repeated or stopped at any time according to the needs of students and teachers, and also the video is a convenient and fun tool to help students concentrate in class, which will clarify their ideas and summarize the main points of the course in a short amount of time that can be learned by students. The use of animated videos is becoming more and more common as technology advances. Students can understand and imagine some phenomena in the historical period through the video, and the video leads them into the real situation.

Before class, students are allowed to obtain materials through the video to increase their expectations for the upcoming course and increase the cultivation of critical thinking and stimulate their interest through the preparation work. Therefore, using new technology such as videos in the classroom is one of the effective ways to improve students' critical thinking [14].

Furthermore, through taking advantage of today's 21st-century technology, Multimedia-based Integrated Instruction (MBI2) is a combination of multimedia to improve the quality of learning and all aspects of critical thinking through some material resources that are hard to find. Critical thinking is divided into several aspects, including the ability to formulate, make assumptions, establish the logic of cause analysis, make a further explanation, give possible solutions, make conclusions, etc.

Nowadays, in the information era, multimedia can be used to communicate and cooperate during the process of learning, search for information and stimulate students' thoughts and ideas. Thus language learning can be facilitated through multimedia. Teaching activities with multimedia technology for both teachers and students act as a bridge between each other to make progress together. Multimedia can provide teachers with teaching ideas as well as help students solve the challenges they encounter in the process of developing the skills that they need. Related research shows that the use of multimedia technology fully increases students' critical thinking, especially in the aspect of making further explanations [15].

To conclude, critical thinking is an indispensable skill for students both in the environment of cultivating innovation ability and in the background of CBI. The teacher-centered teaching mode should be changed. It is up to the students to apply their knowledge and

ideas to solve the problems rather than getting information from teachers without thinking. Therefore, strategies for coping with the challenges under the background of CBI across critical thinking can be summarized as follow, including increasing the variety of curriculum, setting up group discussion, carrying out debate competitions, using video animation that is related to the topic and applying multimedia technology.

4   Conclusion

Based on the previous literature, improving motivation and critical thinking is particularly important for students learning processes. Teachers need to make good use of technology to give students as many opportunities as possible to participate in class, activate students' thinking with their own enthusiasm, change the original teaching methods into active ones, increase the variety of courses, enrich the assessment system and add some competitions that can be carried out to increase the students' thinking activity such as debate. Based on Content-based Instruction, it is important for students to efficiently combine motivation and critical thinking. As a consequence, learning strategies can be better used to enhance students' overall English learning.

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