

English Teaching Mode Based on Project Teaching in Higher Vocational Colleges

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Abstract: With the continuous progress of education reform, the reform of English teaching mode in higher vocational colleges is also on the agenda, and it has become an important part of English teaching reform. But currently, in higher vocational colleges, English teaching has presented some problems towards the teaching mode. How to improve English teaching mode and how to enhance students' effectiveness of learning English have become the focus of the teaching research. "Project Teaching" concept puts forward the reform of classroom teaching in higher vocational colleges. This paper focuses on "Project Teaching" on English teaching mode, analyzes the problems of vocational English teaching and highlights students' effectiveness of learning English.

Keywords: *Project teaching; teaching mode; classroom teaching*

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in higher vocational colleges, due to many factors, the teaching mode applied in English classes has its own uniqueness. This kind of teaching mode comes about due to its unique original status: First, it is students' motivation problem which refers to passive learning motivation. Most of vocational college students usually meet with the problems of how to study English, and most of them learn English only for exams, so the first task English teachers face is to stimulate students' interest in learning, to mobilize students' enthusiasm and motivation so as to turn the passive learning into active learning. Secondly, vocational college students focus on hands-on skills. Therefore, they have to spend more time on their professional practice, which results in a small number of hours used in English classes. What's more, most of vocational college students are poor in basic English. Hence, we are trying to looking for a teaching mode which can improve students' effectiveness of learning English. Since the 1980s, the communicative approach has been adopted to improve the teaching. However, after ten years of teaching practice, we have found the communicative approach does not work well in improving students' English oral and written capability. What's more, students' basic English skills are not well nurtured by that approach. In fact, if there is a careful analysis of various teaching methods, we will find that any pedagogy for the students has its own distinct characteristic of the times, and it has its specific adaptation objects. Forcing to apply any pedagogy to a certain kind of teaching is certainly inappropriate. In this case, it is urgent for us to search for a suitable teaching mode for students in vocational colleges. For these reasons, we take in the

student-centered teaching mode. This teaching mode emphasizes listening and speaking training which come after reading and writing practice. Translation practice goes after them. In the teaching, students are really the main part in the class, and the teacher in the class plays the role of the organizer, supervisor and consultant. Teachers should try to foster student' thinking, providing them with communicative situation, help and encourage them to express their ideas creatively and freely.

II. PROJECT APPROACH AND VOCATIONAL ENGLISH TEACHING

Nowadays, the English level of most of vocational college graduates is too far to reach the requirements of practical and skilled personnel, and it is not well adapted to current trends in society. Therefore, emphasis on English application ability is a priority in English teaching. Many studies have shown that the project approach can help students attain effective goal of grasping expertise and proficiency in English so that students can achieve application level to communicate effectively in English. Through specific teaching tasks, we make some suggestions on how to implement the teaching project in non-English majors in vocational colleges.

Project approach is jointly implemented by students and the teaching activities, and it is a complete project work to be carried out, it emphasizes students' competency in English. Students should handle a relatively independent project by collecting information, setting programs, and carrying out the project. Finally, it comes to the evaluation which tests the students' learning to see how well they conduct the project, whether they understand and master the skills in the entire process. The project teaching tends to explore students' creative potential and highlights maximum practice. Therefore, it works well in improving students' comprehensive ability to solve practical problems.

Project Approach applied in English class helps the continuity for various disciplines of knowledge. The students learn English combined with specialized courses. Therefore, the mode of "English learning + specialized courses learning" can promote training the students with compound talents. To integrate relevant English training program with students' specialized knowledge and skill will help arouse the students' interest in learning English, and enhance their motivation to learn. Therefore, students will be able to learn English actively and at the same time, to promote their specialized courses learning.

III. CONNOTATION OF PROJECT TEACHING

The guiding ideology of the project teaching is that students are assigned the independent tasks and then they complete the tasks through information collection, programs setting, and implementation of the tasks. The evaluation is completed by the students themselves as well. In class, teachers play a role of counseling, guidance and answering questions. The implementation of a project makes the students understand and grasp every aspect of the basic and key teaching contents. The followings show the basic features of the project teaching: Teachers or student teams design classroom activities together and they work as a team to discuss the solution to all the practical problems together, and they fully participate in different roles in the discussion. In the problem-solving process, students not only learn, but also gain the experience of solving problems. Project teaching of vocational English focuses on improving students' English skills as well as developing their vocational skills by means of real workflows and the typical working scene is adopted with the practical teaching content so as to achieve the purposes of "teaching, learning and doing".

IV. CLASSROOM DESIGN PRINCIPLES OF THE PROJECT TEACHING

Project teaching of vocational English highlights the professional ability training and language communicative skills training. Classroom activities are designed to focus on improving students' thinking and problem-solving skills, emphasize the students' learning strategies and self-learning ability. The classroom teaching is fully integrated with the teaching process and specific work items. The teaching is carried out in accordance with the tasks of relevant instructional design, and task-centric content. Tasks need to be selected or designed according to the actual situation of jobs. Project teaching takes the project task as a carrier to implement the whole learning process. Teachers need to focus on the tasks, use a typical product or service item as a carrier to design "learning projects", and to organize the whole teaching. Project teaching is to guide students to lay language foundation through various kinds of project tasks. In the whole process, students' application ability is trained in a typical working scene, and students' language communicative competence is fostered as well. As a result, their comprehensive professional skills are trained imperceptibly.

V. ENFORCE TEACHING PROJECT MODE IN ENGLISH CLASS

Project teaching refers to the teaching process with typical tasks. The teaching content is the center of the actual teaching process. Project teaching is carried out in the form of cooperative learning. As to the teaching methods, the teaching is based on practice in working training base. We consider improving students' language learning as well as professional skills so that they may develop both of them simultaneously. Therefore, we design the language teaching in the typical working environment. Project practice includes

group activities, language skills training and professional learning to enhance students' employability.

In the project teaching, each learning project is designed according to the actual working scene; students work and study with a wide variety of real scenes. The teaching provides students with reading practice, conversation practice, pictures, practice materials and specialized vocabularies and their usage which may be used in the future career. Role-playing and dialogue practice for students helps improve students' language practical ability because students take the initiative to carry out "speak" activities.

Project teaching highlights the teaching which is related to the career. In the teaching, a practical and workable project is designed consistent with students' career planning and development. In the process of project teaching, teachers should help students build working activities and real job situations. Project teaching of vocational English doesn't demand the integrity and systematicness of the English language, but focus on the needs of the workplace English teaching. The teaching combines public English with specialized English. A combination of these two can not only train the students to master basic English skills, but also to help students' major courses learning so as to cultivate and improve students' English practical ability toward their major .

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Evaluation system of project teaching is no longer evaluated by traditional paper methods, but to use a more realistic evaluation way. The purpose of the project is not just the learning of knowledge and skills, but also paying close attention to students' applying knowledge and skills in the working situation. Besides, students' Learning emotional performance needed to be concerned such as the ability to cope with setbacks, and the traits of perseverance, creativity, self-management and self-development, as well as the ability to access and use information, language ability, innovation ability and so on. All these require teachers to be able to evaluate the student's performance of completing the projects, including evaluating their higher-order thinking skills. Assessing students' performance in implementing the project is more diverse than traditional evaluation, because the project is to evaluate students' real practical activities, such as teamwork, interpersonal communication, problem solving, team activities, etc. Through a variety of evaluation strategies and evaluate tools, Teachers can know not only the students' learning outcomes, but also the students' learning process.

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