

## Role Play and English Teaching

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**Abstract.** With the reform and opening up as well as China's entering of WTO, English has been playing an increasingly important part in various politic activities and major economic events; however, the present traditional English teaching is lack of certain practical skills. In order to have a better teaching reform, English communication capability should be improved urgently. During English teaching, practice should be regarded as the beginning and result of English teaching by making full use of teaching materials, which is also the focus of traditional education reform. The main purpose of this paper is to study how to improve students' communication standard by employing teaching skills. In this paper, it mainly studies the important effect of role play on teaching methods and skills.

### Introduction

English has been popular widely among Chinese students as a compulsory course. Some students are even crazy about English since they can express their ideas with English fluently at any time. But some other students have lost confidence in English learning. With the constant expansion of higher institutions, English teaching has become more difficult due to different source places of students, students' learning abilities, learning habits as well as their opinions about the relationship between English and future job. In this way, the so-called teaching bottleneck has been formed gradually, needing to be solved urgently by teaching reform.

Addressing current situation, teachers are seeking ways to make improvements actively, within which role play is usually a common teaching means. Role play is used in foreign language class by simulating real language situation. By this way, students can play different roles according to different situations so as to practise their communication and performance abilities. Meanwhile, students' understanding of language points can be solidified with deeper and more thorough understanding, and they can combine what they learn from textbooks with life experience. Such kind of practice is simulation of realistic life. In the real situations, students' communication ability can be cultivated by conveying information. In this paper, the concrete application of English teaching is explored by analyzing its practical application.

### The Connotation and Features of Role Play

Role play is the extension of communicative approach teaching method, which aims to cultivate students' communicative ability by giving importance to language functions. It doesn't arrange teaching contents and teaching orders by grammatical items; instead, teaching contents should be real and natural language. Besides, language materials should be not only authentic but also rational. The communicative teaching process is also an important part of communicative approaches. Phrases are seen as the basic units of teaching materials, and meanwhile the materials should be real and natural by taking students as the center. The important role of teachers is to offer and organize various activities such as information conversion, situation simulation, role play and games. Teachers should be tolerant with students' language errors without constant correction of their language expressions.

Firstly, role play inherits and carries forward the communicative approach, which is a new kind of teaching skill. It requires students to act specific roles under certain situations during teaching process, such as situation dialogue. For example, the whole class can be divided into several groups, and they should be asked to express their opinions in English so as to give full play to students'

initiative and creativity. Thus, they can think what they want and speak what they want. It is totally different from dramas since performers are required to say particular lines in dramas; while role play aims to improve students' English expression ability so as to meet future need.

### **Design of Teaching Approach for Role Play**

The theme of role play should be challenging, active and interesting. The instructors should write a brief outline of the situation on cards and then give them out to students. Next, teachers should encourage students to speak bravely, and they can even set an example if necessary. Under this circumstance, students' English-speaking ability can be cultivated in an active and easy-going atmosphere.

But it is very important to take students as the center of the whole role-play teaching process, surrounding different themes such as talent show and so on. The students' final results are determined by students' self-assessment, others' assessment as well as teachers' assessment. Besides, teachers can have a larger proportion of role play in the total results according to actual situation. To sum up, the theme of each role play should be concentrated on students to ensure students' enthusiasm as well as class atmosphere, and thus an obviously better teaching effect can be achieved.

### **Implementation of Role-Play Teaching Approach**

The first phrase is preparation, including situation creation and content discussion. Situation creation means the relationship between students and the roles, the communication place and the communicative purpose should be determined. While arranging roles, teachers should take students' personalities and language abilities into consideration. The aim of situation creation is to make students connect language with specific plots. Second, discussion of contents aims to get students' concrete views on particular themes so that they can have a deeper understanding of the roles they act.

The second phrase is semi-knowledge phrase, which includes two parts. The first is demonstration. It aims to teach students what to do. This action can be done by a teacher and a student. The second part is practice, during which students should be asked to practice communication actively in class with proper postures, expressions and stuff.

The third phrase is consolidation, which is made up performance and discussion and analysis. As for performance, students can't be forced to make performance in class since some students take a long time to establish self-confidence. Therefore, teachers can ask some voluntary students to make performance with brief evaluations and comments. The second part is discussion and analysis, during which the best actor and actress as well as the best supported actor and the best creative actor can be selected with certain reasons. Then some gifts such as flowers or spiritual encouragement can be sent to the winners. Next, a hot topic can be selected from the performance for students' discussion and analysis, during which their speaking ability can also be exercised and improved.

### **Conclusion**

There are several advantages of role-play teaching approach. First, it can mobilize students' activeness of study. By role-play section, students can take active part in class with flexible employment of language, so both their knowledge memory and understanding ability can be improved. And their language ability can be turned into communicative ability. Second, students' potentials can be fully explored to give play to their creativity and cooperative spirit. Besides, students' performance talents, language gift and writing ability can all be mobilized, which can not only improve their language learning but also cultivate their strengths. Moreover, with group activities, students' self-consciousness and team cooperative spirit can all be developed.

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