

The Flipped Classroom: A New Attempt in English Teaching in Higher Vocational Colleges

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Abstract

In recent years, English teaching in higher vocational colleges has attracted more and more attention and diverse teaching methods have been applied to English teaching. As a new and subversive teaching model, the flipped classroom will bring opportunities and changes to the development of English teaching reform in higher vocational colleges. Based on the author 's learning and teaching experience, this paper first analyzed the main advantages of the flipped classroom and then proposed implementation strategies of the flipped classroom in English teaching in higher vocational colleges.

Keywords: Flipped classroom; Higher vocational college; English teaching; Innovation

1 Introduction

The flipped classroom requires students to learn the new lesson in advance by watching courseware or video materials before they are taught in the classroom. They should bring their learning content and questions to the classroom. In the classroom, teachers organize language practice, group discussions or personal presentations with students as the dominant role. Teachers can participate in students' activities and answer some general questions, so as to strengthen and internalize the knowledge to achieve better teaching results. Obviously, the flipped classroom has changed the role of teachers and students in subversive ways[1]. Teachers are tutors for students and even one of the learning members sometimes; students may become the organizer of learning and truly become the

main body of learning. This role change increases the interaction between students or teachers and students, which creates a personalized communication method.

2 The Main Advantages of the Flipped Classroom

2.1 To help students with learning difficulties

In traditional teaching model, teachers are most concerned about students with good academic performance and ignore other students, which is likely to cause polarization and vicious circle. The flipped classroom can easily achieve the collective teaching, fair teaching and personalized teaching. Students with learning difficulties can listen to courseware and video materials repeatedly according to their actual situation, until they understand it. At the same time, the flipped classroom also allows students with learning difficulties to get up the courage to read or communicate with the machine to avoid awkwardness and bashfulness with wrong answers in the traditional classroom[2]. As time passes, students with learning difficulties can complete the corresponding teaching tasks and achieve the desired learning results through a period of great effort.

2.2 To increase classroom interaction

The flipped classroom returns the classroom to students to a great extent and it takes many student-centered teaching activities, such as group discussions, personal presentations and individual coaching. By virtue of this interaction and exchanges between students or teachers and students, teachers can arouse students' interest in learning English and stimulate their initiative to participate in classroom teaching activities, which contributes to the formation of good style of study and the development of good study habits.

2.3 To make teachers know more about students

The flipped classroom is a new teacher-led and student-centered model for active learning and fair exchange, which allows teachers to narrow the psychological distance with students to eliminate fear and tension caused by students' passive learning. This will stimulate students' learning enthusiasm. At the same time, students will communicate with teachers, discuss with them and seek advice from them. Teachers will have a better understanding of each student's specific situation and difficulties, so that they can give more targeted and personalized guidance to make the collective teaching and individual guidance complement each other well[3].

2.4 To achieve students' personalization

Learning facts show that each student has different learning excitement, and learning strategies and methods vary with each individual. Some students are

good at sound input; some students adapt to visual stimulation and some students like to experience in practice. The flipped classroom can adapt to all students' learning situations. Each student can find their own excitement and learning entry point, and find their best learning method. Students can design different programs with varying degrees according to their own situation to realize the goal of collective teaching, individual counseling and common progress. For example, slow students can make effort to improve their knowledge foundation. They can watch the video repeatedly until they grasp the basic knowledge. Then, they can learn new content. Some students have a fairly good command of English and they can focus on training communication skills and learning in-depth content. Teachers can divide students into learning groups where fast students can help students with learning difficulties and train themselves, so that fast students can help others and make progress.

2.5 To change the classroom management

In the traditional teaching class, teachers not only teach knowledge, but also always play the role of the police to concentrate on maintaining the classroom in order to ensure the smooth progress of classroom teaching. Some students are distracted in the class; some have a weak foundation; some students are afraid to ask questions; some students are born to be active. All kinds of accidents will affect the normal classroom teaching. In the flipped classroom, the role of students has undergone subversive changes[4]. Each person is an actor and spectator; they are both learning participants and beneficiaries. Teachers' role has changes from the former supervisor into a mentor or participant. In the whole classroom, everyone has their own roles and scenes, and there is no time for them to be distracted, sleep or desert. From the beginning to the end of the classroom, students can learn, experience and manage in a happy atmosphere.

3 Implementation Strategies of the Flipped Classroom in Vocational English Teaching

3.1 To prepare instructional videos

In the flipped classroom, students learn online video courses with computers or mobile terminals independently. This requires the teacher to make an overall plan or teaching scheme for an English course in advance, which is usually called preparing lessons. The plan should include the long-term goal for students to master knowledge and possess targeted ability and the short-term goal for students to complete the knowledge points and necessary training. There are two ways for teachers to prepare an instructional video:

First is to create instructional videos. As the name implies, the creation of teaching video is that teachers record or edit teaching videos according to their own teaching needs and existing teaching resources, and timely put them online for students to watch and learn before class. The creation of teaching videos must

be combined with teaching objectives (knowledge goals and ability goals) and be integrated with students' actual level, especially the individual differences in students. Besides, videos must be based on students' learning methods and habits and ought to take into account the practicability, applicability and enjoyment of the teaching content, .

Second is to choose teaching videos. Although the created teaching videos are targeted and effective, recording high-quality videos requires skilled technical operation and excellent teaching skills, which is a challenge or difficulty that achieving the flipped classroom needs to overcome. As mentioned above, in the current situation of vocational English teaching, there are few teachers who are equipped with the two skills, so it is very difficult for all teachers to record teaching videos[5]. However, There is always a way out. English teachers can introduce or use ready-made teaching videos to service the flipped classroom. Now, a lot of teaching resources are paper materials with supporting video materials. This requires teachers to collect, compare and filter appropriate teaching videos extensively on the premise that they fully understand the teaching objectives and students' needs. In fact, this is a process for preparing the teaching video (lesson preparation). In the later stage, teachers need to adjust or reorganize these video clips in accordance with the teaching needs and then put them online for students to learn and use before class. This can also achieve good results of the flipped classroom.

3.2 To organize classroom activities

After the learning content is transmitted to students in the form of instructional videos before class, there will be more time for students to practice and apply the language in class, so as to train and improve students' language applied ability, and to optimize the teaching quality and teaching effect. In the flipped classroom, students have already learned the teaching video - the input of knowledge, so the classroom is mainly to organize students to use the language - the output of knowledge. The traditional teaching model also has designed this activity, but due to the limited classroom time, the students' training or knowledge output is not very good, which does not play a role in consolidating and internalizing knowledge. The flipped classroom just makes up for this shortcoming of traditional teaching[6]. Classroom activities can be divided into the following sections based on students' situation and the teaching content:

First, students can create content. Students can create more similar or related activities based on instructional videos they have learned before class. For example, students can create more dialogues according to the videos. By practicing the scene for many times, students can grasp the key sentences or customary expressions in the dialogue well. For another example, students can adapt the reading materials in the video into stories, short plays or news reports to deepen their understanding of the article.

The second is to solve the problem independently. In flipped classroom, class teaching provides more time for each student to communicate with the teacher individually. Students can ask questions they do not understand, express their

different views and put forward better teaching suggestions. It is difficult for the traditional teaching model to do this.

Third is the inquiry-based activities. Students can conduct in-depth inquiry learning based on the content of teaching videos. For example, students can discuss or debate a social phenomenon in the video material in groups. They also can express personal perspective or make a personal presentation to interact with members in the group or the whole class. Students also can investigate a topic and draw a conclusions or form a report. Finally, they can share it with others individually or in groups. Besides, teachers can also organize students to write an article on a certain topic in English and put these articles on the class website for students to share, so that they can learn from each other and jointly improve English learning ability[7].

Fourth is the intensive counseling or answering questions. For common problems and errors appearing in students' video learning and classroom activities, it is easy for teachers to answer or explain these questions in the flipped classroom. In this case, the knowledge teaching will get twice the result with half the effort. Students have such questions generally, so the order and student' concentration in the flipped classroom is good, which the traditional teaching model can not be compared with.

4 Conclusion

The flipped classroom is bound to bring great changes in English teaching in higher vocational colleges. Practice has proved that the flipped classroom does change the path of teaching and learning, and improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, any new thing needs a process of exploration and advancement from its starting to maturity. In general, the flipped classroom meets the need of English teaching reform in higher vocational colleges. Although the process is long, the direction is correct; although the road is tortuous, the future is bright. Therefore, we have to make unremitting efforts for it. Mr. Hu Zhuanglin once said, " It is not a bad thing that there exist different opinions in foreign language teaching. The key is that someone express their views; some people listen carefully and then some make decisions". This argument is also suitable for English teaching in higher vocational colleges. As long as more and more vocational English teachers have the courage to bring forth new ideas, to try new things and to insist on it, the flipped classroom teaching model will enjoy popular support and will certainly change the traditional English teaching model completely, so as to improve vocational English teaching quality and cultivate more inter-disciplinary talents with a good mastery of the major and English to the society.

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