

Practice Research on Students' Needs-Oriented Individualized and Self-service College English Teaching Mode in Higher Vocational Colleges

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Abstract—Higher vocational colleges attract increasing number of students, who have many choices after graduation, such as hunting jobs, pursuing bachelors' degree at home and abroad for further study. This diversity leads to the fact that the students have different needs in their learning English. Moreover, different students have different foundation and ability in learning English. Therefore, English teaching in vocational colleges is faced with great challenges. If the students are taught in the same way, it will have a negative impact on their future development. In this essay, the idea of students' needs-oriented individualized and self-service college English teaching mode is put forward based on years' practice. The mode combines graded teaching and classified guidance to maximize English teaching and learning in higher vocational education. It tries to meet students' diverse demands. It has been applied into practice and achieved good results.

Keywords—students' needs-oriented; individualized and self-service teaching mode; graded teaching; classified guidance

I. INTRODUCTION

For a long time, three main problems of English teaching in higher vocational colleges are discussed. Firstly, the gap in students' English foundation and the diverse needs of students contrast sharply with the single teaching mode; secondly, our society needs various graduates with various talents and English abilities, while vocational colleges only offer the same traditional classroom teaching mode without practice platform for all students, whose independent learning as well as their individual needs and potential *can't* be developed. Finally, compared with bachelors who accept four years' schooling, students in higher vocational colleges have less time to study English and hereafter it is difficult to meet the students' individual choices and demands for English learning.

Therefore, we must renew our idea and reform the teaching mode. We suggest creating a new individualized self-service teaching mode so that English teaching in vocational colleges can meet the students' diverse needs for English, thus to improve the quality of graduates from higher vocational colleges.

II. BACKGROUND REQUIREMENTS

Item 31 and 32 in Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and

Development(hereinafter referred to as National Education Plan(2010-2020)) write that higher vocational education demands to set up the concept of diversified talents, respect the individual choice, encourage the development of personality and teach students without sticking to one pattern. It also asks to offer individualized quality education to each student, pay attention to students' different characteristics and personality, and develop each student's strengths and potential. Another two documents that emphasize students' needs are Decision of the State Council on Accelerating the Development of Modern Vocational Education (2014) as well as Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Further Deepening the Teaching Reform for Higher Vocational Education and Comprehensively Improving Talent Quality (2015). both point out that higher vocational education should insist on systematic teaching and diverse talents developing so as to build "overpass" for students to have diverse choices and gain individualized success.

As far as college English teaching is concerned, College English Curriculum Teaching Requirements (2007) and College English Course Standards (2013) state that college English teaching should follow the principle of classified guidance and individualized teaching to meet the needs of individualized teaching. Likely, the Higher Vocational Education English Course Teaching Requirements (2010) points out that vocational English course should adhere to the principle of unified requirements and classified guidance.

In view of all the documents, the existing teacher-centered pattern of English teaching may be remolded by introducing students' needs-oriented individualized and self-service teaching mode. The new mode should be built on modern information technology so that English language teaching and learning will be, to a certain extent, free from the constraints of time or place and attach particular importance to the central position of students and "the leading role of teachers in the teaching and learning process".

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE NEW TEACHING MODE AND MAIN PROBLEMS SOLVED

Students' needs-oriented education means that education should start from the development of students and help each student to achieve active and individualized development. The new teaching mode aims to meet each student's need by means

of graded teaching and individualized guidance. In the meantime, a three-dimension course system, self-service system of learning resources, practice platform and diversified assessment system will be offered to all students.

Three main problems in traditional teaching are solved in the new teaching mode.

To begin with, students' foundation in English is taken into account with the help of graded teaching and classified guidance. Students who did not learn English well in high school can choose the materials that are easier to understand whereas others who are willing to go abroad can make use of the materials that are difficult. After class, all students can make appointments with teachers to discuss their problems in person.

Another issue is that there is a gap between what are taught and what are required by the students and their employment. The teachers try to meet students' needs by providing them all kinds of materials that are in want. A three-level teaching and four-dimension after-class individualized guidance system are created in the new teaching mode, in which materials as easy as A B C, materials as difficult as IELTS, materials on workplace English, materials on how to study further to get a bachelor's degree are offered. Consequently, both students' needs and needs from the employment are met.

Thirdly, traditional graded teaching is reformed and improved. The new teaching mode places equal stress on individualized self-service guidance which can complement the graded teaching. In practice, a whole system based on three-dimension English courses, self-service resources, practice platform and diversified assessment is designed to promote teaching and learning.

Implemented from 2010, this individualized self-service teaching mode is applied to about 50,000 students in the author's college, and has been accepted in many other colleges and universities.

It effectively solves the contradictions and problems between general and individual, cramming method of teaching and active method of teaching in vocational colleges.

IV. PRACTICE OF THE NEW TEACHING MODE

Guided by the idea of graded teaching and individualized guidance, we practiced and gradually improved this students' needs-oriented individualized self-service teaching mode. In the long time practice, this mode mainly includes the following five aspects.

A. Setting Up a Three-Dimension, Individualized Graded and Classified Courses System.

Since 2010, we have started a graded teaching practice and established a three-dimension course system by way of combining graded compulsory courses, optional courses as well as online independent learning courses. The three dimensions of courses are integrated and permeable with one another. Because the students have difference in their original English levels before college, three grades of compulsory English courses are offered to all students, Grade A, Grade B, Grade C, ranging from the most difficult to the easiest.

Students in Grade A, whose English is best, will comprehensively cultivate and improve their comprehensive language application ability and try to pass CET-4 and CET-6. Students in Grade B pay attention to the cultivation of general English communicative ability and pass the Workplace English Proficiency Test. Students in Grade C, who have the weakest foundation in learning English, will be ensured that they will master the basics of English and are able to communicate in daily situations.

Besides graded teaching, classified guidance is offered in order to meet the personalized needs of students for career promotion, overseas study, English test or pursuing bachelors' degree from September 2013. By setting up Foreign Language Center in the author's college, students could make appointment with teachers in the center to talk about how to improve their English according to their own needs so that each student is able to overcome their difficulties in learning English and hence improve their English. For example, the students have received guidance on how to practice oral English in future workplace.

Moreover, a great number of optional courses are supplied to all students, ranging from humanities literacy, social science, innovation and entrepreneurship to English skills so that the students can select the course according to their needs. A survey showed that everybody is satisfied with his English learning.

At the same time, independent online learning courses have been opened on "Worlduc.com". Two online resource-sharing courses, "College English A" and "College English B" are established. Other online platforms, such as "Unipus", English APP and "scctedu.com" are set up and opened for students from 2017. All the online resources aim to serve the personalized needs of students.

B. Establishing Online Self-service Learning Resource System.

With the development of information technology, online learning gains increasing attention in English teaching and learning.

According to graded teaching and classified guidance, a self-service online learning resource system, this consists of resources for students to improve the speaking and writing skills, resources to practice students' real communicative ability in workplace, resources to facilitate further study both at home and abroad, is constructed. The online resource is like a menu, on which it is convenient for students to order what they need with a click.

In this online self-service learning resource system, in accordance with graded teaching, we have established three levels of "customized online courses", namely Level A, Level B and Level C for students to make personalized choices. We have also built "one-to-one" and "one-to-many" teaching and communication channels between teachers and students APPs on smart phones. Surrounded by a sea of online resources, it is feasible for every student to realize the dream of learning English beyond limitation of time, space and place. Learn English whenever they have time and wherever they may be with a click online.

C. Constructing English Practice Platform.

In this new teaching mode, the teachers carry out the integrated design of teaching, learning and practicing. Besides teaching and learning, personalized English practice activities off classes are constructed aiming to train the students' English skills and fully promote the functions of English education. The activities are arranged on three platforms who integrate with one another in a trinity.

The first platform is the traditional classroom practice. In classroom of Grade A students, the teachers mainly train the students to meet the needs of passing CET-4 and CET-6, such as CET-4 listening and writing practice. In classroom of Grade B students, teachers try to attract students to practice the speaking skills in future workplace and practical writing skills. In classroom of Grade C students, students are encouraged to practice simple English expressions and conversations in daily communication.

The second platform is the practice center, foreign language center. Foreign language center is a practice base for all the students. They can organize various English activities to practice their own abilities under the guide of teachers, such as oral English workshop, English contest groups and overseas students' activities and so on. On the one hand, foreign language center caters for students' needs to put what they learned in classrooms into practice. On the other hand, students may develop their abilities in organizing activities, communication, teamwork and broaden their horizons.

The third one is Ali-baba Business Base. It innovates and constructs a new form of English practice in real life to meet the students' high-level development. In Ali-baba Business School and cooperative enterprises, students practice in real-life work environment and carry out real foreign trades with foreigners online in English. Domestic and foreign cooperative enterprises have set up a stage for students to practice English and put English into future jobs by completing online trade.

D. Reforming the Assessment System.

Although the new teaching mode combines process assessment with final examinations, it highlights the process assessment. The whole assessment is mainly composed of four parts. Firstly, it increases the proportion of assessment on practical English speaking and listening ability. The above is the first part in the assessment, which is named as class performance. Secondly, autonomous learning, such as online learning, learning on English platforms, is taken into assessment. It is called independent learning ability assessment, the second part. The third part is the assessment on practices in real-life situations in Ali-baba Base. Final examination is the last part, which is in the form of examination papers at the end of each semester. The four parts form an assessment system in a certain proportion. In this way, students' enthusiasm and initiative in learning English are activated. This new system of assessment helps to achieve teaching goals and promotes the improvement of teaching.

E. Optimizing Teaching Methods

In the first place, English teaching methods should be designed with students as the center. To construct a dynamic

classroom, brainstorming and heuristic teaching are often adopted to encourage creative thinking. Such methods as role-playing and experiential English language teaching is strengthened, because these methods can appeal students to take an active part in learning, thus enhance classroom vitality and drive teaching to meet students' various needs.

Secondly, English teaching ought to adopt different methods in class and after class, online and offline, and integrate teaching, learning and evaluation into a unity.

The teaching makes full use of modern information equipment and intelligent teaching means, such as "Unipus", APPs on smart phones so that students could be free to make decisions on what to learn, where to preview and when to review.

Further, many extracurricular activities can be implemented on the platforms, namely, the foreign language enter as well as Ali Baba Business Base. The various activities in the foreign language center, English corner, Ali Baba Business Base, English association have received good results. Therefore, extracurricular activities should be included in the teaching plan and assessment system to effectively stimulate and mobilize students' enthusiasm in learning English.

V. GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE NEW TEACHING MODE

The teaching mode has been applied into practice and improved constantly in the author's college since 2010. It is indicated that it has achieved remarkable results.

A. The English Teaching Mode in Vocational Colleges Has Been Innovated.

The individualized and self-service college English teaching mode, concentrating on graded teaching and classified guidance as well as practicing platform, took the lead to meet the requirement of student-focused education in Shandong. The principle of being students-focused and teaching students in accordance of their aptitude is the core idea of modern education reform. It can even be said that the new mode has set up a benchmark for the higher vocational English teaching reform.

B. Students' Enthusiasm Has Been Greatly Improved and English Skills Have Been Promoted.

Although English has been an optional course since 2014 in the author's college, 100% students take English courses. 86.8% of them participate in online courses to learn autonomously. An increasing number of students join in the foreign language center and Ali Baba base to practice their practical English and develop their individual potential fully. English teaching and learning laid a strong foundation for the students to find good jobs, pursue further both at home and abroad, and even start foreign trade business. Students reaped numerous benefits from it.

C. Fruitful Results and Awards Are Gained in Teachers' Teaching and Research.

Since 2010, with the promotion of this teaching mode, we have set up five provincial online resource sharing courses granted by provincial Education Department of Shandong. The teachers have published six papers in national core journals

and more than ten papers in provincial journals. Seven textbooks have been published, three of which are for the 12th five-year plan. In the past eight years, the satisfaction rate in students' assessment has been increasing year by year.

D. A Fresh Start in Serving the Society and the Companies is Set Up.

In the construction of the English practice base, Ali Baba E-Commerce Group in Shandong established a cross-border e-commerce enterprise, Ali E-commerce College, providing students with an operation platform to practice foreign trade in English. More than 20 foreign trade enterprises are attracted to locate in our college. On the one hand, it is beneficial for the students to experience real-life foreign trade on campus; on the other hand, the enterprises have made profit in the base with so many students working as employees for them. It is a win-win mode. The base is recognized and popularized both by the college and by the city.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the information age, only through the combination of online and offline method can we meet the different needs of students. Students' needs-oriented individualized and self-service college English teaching mode is designed to build an overpass for students so that they have a variety of choices in learning and achieve diverse successes in different ways. In

other words, the new teaching guarantees students' individualized learning, independent learning and lifelong learning.

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