

Research on the Reform and Innovation of College English Teaching in the Context of “Internet Plus”

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Abstract: As a basic cause concerning national economy and people's livelihood, education has ushered in unprecedented development opportunities in the context of “Internet +”, especially for the college English teaching which is more widely integrated with Internet technology. In order to keep up with the trend of the times, seize the development opportunities in the context of “Internet plus” and break through the shackles of the traditional college English teaching mode, many colleges and universities have begun to reform and innovate the theory and mode of college English teaching. In this paper, the influences of college English teaching are first analyzed from the perspective of “Internet plus”. Afterwards, this study deeply examines the necessity of reform and innovation for college English teaching in the background of the times, and finally explores the direction and path of reform and innovation.

1. Introduction

Since entering the 21st Century, the Internet technology has gradually infiltrated into all aspects of society, and has completely changed people's lives and work habits. Especially in recent years, with the popularity of mobile network terminals, the era of “Internet plus” has come. As a major course in China's higher education stage, college English is directly related to the students' postgraduate entrance exams and overseas study, so much attention should be paid to its teaching philosophy and model. In the context of “Internet plus”, college English teaching faces a complex situation where opportunities and challenges coexist. Besides, the traditional teaching concepts and models become somewhat singular and backward, lagging behind the ever-changing pace of the “Internet plus”. As a result, it is essential to reform and innovate the traditional college English teaching. According to the practice of college English teaching reform and innovation in recent years, the teaching concept has changed substantially, and the teaching methods have also developed in a diversified manner, so that the quality and efficiency of college English teaching have been greatly enhanced. Nevertheless, reform needs to be unremittingly insisted on and innovation is inseparable from the endless power, so it still takes a long way to complete the reform and innovation of college English teaching.

2. Analysis of the Necessity of College English Teaching Reform and Innovation in the context of “Internet Plus”

2.1 Inevitable Requirements of Education Reform

At present, the reform in the concept and model of higher education is in full swing. As an important basic course in higher education, college English necessarily needs to undergo reform and innovation along with the reform of the entire education system. College English course includes both public English and professional English. Among them, there is no specific restriction against the content of public English, which is designed to cultivate the basic English ability of students. The latter professional English is designed for English-related majors, which is mainly related to major selected by students, with the purpose of cultivating professional English application-oriented talents. In the context of “Internet plus”, not only are many specific types of enterprises in need of professional English talents, each enterprise requires staff to have a comprehensive English ability.

However, it is difficult for the traditional public English teaching to develop students' comprehensive English ability, which reflects the internal driving force of education reform and innovation. With the full arrival of the "Internet plus" era, students can only be more competitive in the human resources market with the comprehensive ability of listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. This is an important direction of current education reform.

2.2 The Inevitable Trend that Internet Technology Development Brings

The development of Internet technology has stimulated major changes in the times, and people's consciousness, thinking and behavior have also undergone dramatic changes. People are the basic elements of society, so changes in people will inevitably bring about changes in the whole society, which in turn will lead to a series of chain changes in economic, cultural, political and other social elements. All kinds of Internet-based software programming languages are basically presented in English, and now every aspect of society is inseparable from the Internet. Therefore, modern people must have a certain knowledge of English in order to keep up with the pace. In the past, the college public English course was not taken seriously, which proposed the requirements for reform and innovation in the concept of college English teaching. In addition, with the continuous development of information and communication technologies, the world economic integration has become more apparent. As a universal language, English plays an increasingly important role in many companies and institutions in China, so the demand for talents with good English listening and speaking skills is also enlarged. Nevertheless, the traditional college English teaching does not pay enough attention to the cultivation of listening and speaking ability, and this requires the reform and innovation of college English teaching.

3. Opportunities and Challenges Faced by College English Teaching in the Era of "Internet Plus"

3.1 Opportunities Faced by College English Teaching

3.1.1 More Diverse Teaching Methods

English is an important basic course, and it has a very important position in college education in our country. As a basic language subject, the traditional college English teaching is mainly carried out by means of classroom teaching. This teaching method is very singular, which makes students have less interest in classroom teaching and affects the efficiency and quality of the whole teaching process. In the context of the "Internet plus", college English can be taught in a multi-modality manner. As a result, the teachers do not have to teach by adopting the traditional means, but can try a variety of teaching methods through the Internet technology. For students, they have wider access to knowledge in the "Internet plus" era, greatly reducing their dependence on classroom teaching. At the same time, the teachers will be bolder to make innovation over the teaching methods, on the premise that students do not completely rely on classroom teaching. With the richness of teaching methods, the efficiency and quality of college English teaching will inevitably be significantly improved, providing a good foundation for further reform and innovation.

3.1.2 Changes in Students' Learning Philosophy and Methods

In the context of "Internet plus", the most affected group must be the young students. From the perspective of age, the time period of their growth is precisely the stage of rapid development of Internet technology, and the network has been fully integrated into their consciousness and behavioral habits. The traditional way of learning English is to acquire knowledge through classroom teaching and memorize knowledge points by rote around textbooks after class. However, the Internet technology has fundamentally changed the way information is disseminated, which broadens the channels for students to acquire knowledge. At the same time, the Internet-based instant messaging tools have significantly narrowed the distance between teachers and student and increased the communication efficiency, which frees students from the boring and monotonous classroom teaching. The Internet technology has profound and long-lasting impacts on the student

group and subtly changed the learning philosophy and methods of students. This change provides an internal driving force for the reform and innovation of college English teaching.

3.1.3 Fundamental Shift in the Role of Teachers

As an old saying goes, “A teacher is one who could propagate the doctrine, impart professional knowledge and resolve doubts.” It can be seen that in the course of the historical development of China for thousands of years, the position of teachers as “knowledge lecturers” is clear. Even in the development course of new China, the role of teachers has changed, but the positioning of “knowledge lecturers” has never been abandoned. In the context of “Internet plus”, the role of the teacher has undergone a subversive change. This is because with the help of information dissemination technology, a lot of knowledge can be accessed through various channels without being taught by teachers, which is of a great liberation for teachers. In the regular college English teaching, the role of teacher is shifting from leader and lecturer to solver and guider, which greatly stimulates the atmosphere of classroom teaching. In addition, students’ independent learning interest has been greatly stimulated, so that teachers have more energy and space to think about more theoretical teaching. As a result, the teachers have become the real practitioners and guiders of reform and innovation in college English teaching.

3.2 Challenges Faced by College English Teaching

3.2.1 Mixed Massive Internet Information

The development of information communication technology has brought a huge amount of Internet information. Due to the lack of effective information filtering mechanism, college students are exposed to good or bad information through the Internet. College students are at the age of active thinking and poor self-control ability. Although they have the ability to discriminate the merits and demerits of massive network information, they lack the resistance to the temptation brought by bad information. At present, it is common for students to bow their heads to play mobile phones in college English classes, and “phubbers” are also very popular in daily life, all of which manifest that students are easily distracted by irrelevant information. In the current college English teaching reform, it is an important direction to transform traditional cramming teaching into independent learning with the help of Internet platform. However, many students are prone to laissez-faire in the face of massive network information, thereby greatly affecting their learning effect.

3.2.2 Difficulties for Teaching Skills in Meeting the Requirements

In the traditional college English teaching model, teachers play a very obvious dominant role, while students are only passive recipients of knowledge. With the advent of the “Internet plus” era, the dominant position of teachers in teaching activities has been gradually weakened, and students’ independent learning has become the trend of the times. From the current practice of college English teaching, new teaching methods such as micro-courses, flipped classroom and MOOC have been widely used in teaching, and students can complete independent learning in class with the help of the Internet platform. However, the maturity and perfection of the independent learning classroom teaching model requires a high level of teaching skills to adapt to it. Currently, there is no mature independent learning model for reference, and teachers can only gradually summarize experience in continuous practice so as to improve their teaching skills. In this way, it cannot keep up with the pace of college English teaching reform and innovation. In addition, the number of teachers of public English courses is relatively small in many colleges and universities, and some are part-time teachers of English majors. As a consequence, the college English teachers assume quite heavy teaching tasks, and it is difficult for them to have sufficient time and energy to improve their teaching skills.

3.2.3 Relatively Backward College Teaching Resources

With the advent of the “Internet plus” era, the information explosion has fundamentally driven

the reform and innovation of education. However, regardless of what forms of reform and innovation, relevant basic resources are needed to match them. As a language course with both theory and application, English needs education resources as the basis in the reform and innovation of its teaching mode. At the same time, the teaching resources consist of two types - hardware resources and software resources. Among them, the former refers to all kinds of equipment used in English teaching activities, including computers, voice equipment and projection equipment. The latter resource refers to the theoretical research strength related to English teaching, including textbooks, audio-video, and text image data. In most colleges and universities in China, the hardware facilities related to English teaching are imperfect, and the voice classrooms with relatively high popularity rate are not fully utilized, which is far from the requirements of independent interactive teaching in the context of “Internet plus”. What’s more, in terms of software resources, the current teaching materials and audio-video materials are backward, the settings of which do not demonstrate the characteristics of the Internet era.

4. Idea of College English Reform in the context of “Internet Plus”

4.1 Idea of English Vocabulary Teaching Reform

Vocabulary is the foundation of English learning, and vocabulary teaching still occupies a large proportion in college English teaching. Traditional vocabulary learning methods are mainly “cramming” by teachers and rote memorization by students, which waste teachers’ time and consumes students’ energy, and the teaching effects barely live up to expectations. English vocabulary teaching itself is rather boring, so how to stimulate students’ interest in learning is an important idea of reform. At present, mobile intelligent terminal devices have become very popular among college students, and mobile phones and iPad are very attractive to students, so attention should be paid to this direction in the teaching reform. In the context of “Internet plus”, a large number of APPs on English vocabulary learning have emerged. Teachers may select appropriate and effective learning software, so that students can complete learning only through mobile phones. It should be noted that teachers should make learning plans for students and design feedback schemes about learning effects, so as to ensure that students truly acquire relevant knowledge.

4.2 Idea of English Listening and Speaking Teaching Reform

In traditional English teaching, teachers pay more attention to the cultivation of students’ abilities in grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing. However, due to the long-term insufficient cultivation of listening and speaking ability and the lack of learning scenario, students are unable to exercise their English listening and speaking ability in ordinary times, and the Chinese college students have generally low level of English listening and speaking abilities. English is essentially a language whose most basic function for human beings is listening and speaking, thus the cultivation of English listening and speaking ability depends on effective scenarios. Only by practicing in a certain scenario for a long time can students develop excellent English listening and speaking ability. For the listening teaching, teachers may select some listening materials that can arouse students’ interest from the Internet, such as political hotspots, popular movies, TV programs and popular songs. In this process, teachers should pay attention to the effective penetration of knowledge points; otherwise the good learning effect could not be gained. For the oral teaching, teachers may use instant messaging to establish groups for exchanges about learning, such as WeChat group and QQ group, so that students can communicate with each other in English through voice in the group and create an effective scenario on the network.

5. Innovative Strategies of College English Teaching in the Context of “Internet Plus”

5.1 Sharing English Curriculum Resources by Making Full Use of Emerging Technologies

The rapid development of Internet technology is providing an inexhaustible internal driving force for innovation. The innovation of college English teaching is inseparable from the emerging

Internet technology, because technological innovation is the source of all innovation. Teachers should keep abreast of the development trend of the era, pay close attention to emerging Internet technologies and actively explore ways to combine them with English teaching, so as to make innovative attempts in teaching methods by using emerging technologies and combining students' characteristics. For example, in view of the fact that app software has become the most widely used technology, teachers may use or develop apps related to English teaching to share English course resources, which can not only greatly enhance students' interest in learning, but also accumulate more power sources through brainstorming.

5.2 Enhancing Teacher-Student Interaction by Making the Most of Communication Software

With the emergence of Internet-based instant messaging software, people's communication habits have been changed dramatically. No longer limited by distance and time, people can communicate with each other in various forms such as text, audio and video anytime and anywhere in cyberspace. English itself is a language for human interaction and communication. In the innovation of teaching mode, therefore, all kinds of communication software should be fully utilized, which can not only create an effective scenario for English listening and speaking training, but also enhance the communication and teacher-student interaction. For example, it is advisable that teachers shall conduct one-to-many online teaching through group chat, motivating students to discuss in groups and ask questions about their doubts. This interactive method can not only break through the constraints of classroom, but also enhance the sensational distance between teachers and students via communication and interaction, and further create a good atmosphere for innovation.

6. Conclusions

In the context of "Internet plus", in order to better adapt to the upgrading of talent demand for social and economic development, education reform has long been a concern for the whole society. It is foreseeable that the network information technology will continue to develop at a very fast speed, and national boundaries in the economic field will become increasingly blurred; more and more English proficiency of all kinds of talents are required in the process of national construction and development. To sum up, college English teaching must be constantly reformed and innovated in order to train useful talents for the society.

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