The Exploration and Reflection on College English Teaching in “Internet +” Era

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Abstract. The "Internet +" era has brought both opportunities and challenges to education. Taking college English teaching as an example, this paper discusses the teaching reform of college education from the aspects of the transformation of college English teaching concepts, the reform of teaching methods and means, and the reform of evaluation methods. College English teaching in the "Internet +" era is a "learner-centered" experiential teaching, which adopts a variety of mixed informationalized teaching modes. With the support of network technology breaks through the time and space constraints of traditional teaching classrooms, helps students develop their personalized learning and independent learning abilities, and enables college English teaching to obtain sublimation and vitality during the process of informationization.

The Opportunities and Challenges Brought by “Internet +” Era

The arrival of the “Internet +” era has promoted the informatization process in various fields including education. The rapid development of information technology provides better technical support and a broader platform for college English teaching.

It’s universally accepted that “information technology has a revolutionary impact on the development of education and must be given high priority” [1]. This indicates that the deep integration of information technology and education is an inevitable trend of China's education reform in the 21st century.

The “Internet +” era has brought opportunities and challenges to college education. Informatization is the necessary carrier and inevitable development trend of modern education. College English teaching should consciously cater to the “Internet+” wave and actively integrate Internet technology into the reform and development of classroom teaching.

The Transformation of College English Teaching Concept in “Internet +” Era

The traditional university classroom teaching mode is a teacher-centered, book-centered and classroom-centered teaching model. Such a classroom teaching model often forms a situation in which knowledge is instilled by teachers in one direction and accepted by students passively. Many students have been learning English for many years, but still can't say or use it. It is a typical “dumb English”. It is not difficult to find that the defects of the traditional teaching mode are very obvious. The key point is that the students who are the subject of cognition are always passively accepting knowledge throughout the whole teaching process. The initiative of students’ learning is neglected and even suppressed.

Obviously, this is inconsistent with the requirements of talent cultivation "Internet plus" era. The traditional model cannot bear the burden of cultivating high-qualified and creative talents. Therefore, changing the traditional teaching mode and creating an efficient classroom model which adapts to the requirements of “Internet +” era are imperative.

College English teaching in “Internet plus” era should adopt “learner-centered” experiential teaching, paying attention to students' participation in language use. The most fundamental thing is to realize the shift from “teaching as the center” to “learning as the center”, the shift from “teachers
transferring knowledge to students” to “letting students discover and create knowledge themselves”, and the shift from “teaching mode” to “learning mode” [2].

“Student-centered” education includes the transformation of teaching concepts, management concepts, and service concepts, as well as the reform of teaching methods, teaching means, and evaluation methods. The courses taught by the author (including “College English”, “Drama English”, “The Comparison and Communication between Chinese Culture and Western Culture”) adopt the combination of online MOOC and offline classroom teaching, and apply various modern teaching methods, aiming to build the “student-centered” classroom that meets the requirements of the new era. The “student-centered” classroom is a classroom where students make full use of modern information technology, actively learning and thinking. It is a classroom where students can study fully independently. It is a classroom where teacher-students interaction and students’ mutual interaction can be realized. It is a classroom where students can construct their meanings actively.

Reform of College English Teaching Methods and Means in “Internet +” Era

With the development and popularization of network technology, the teaching of college English can be supported by modern information technology such as the Internet and smart devices inside and outside the classroom, breaking through the time and space constraints of traditional classrooms.

On one hand, students can apply the Internet to collect information and materials according to the needs of the course, and use PPT, on-line questionnaire, audio or video editing and producing techniques to more demonstrate their understandings and opinions.

On the other hand, teachers can apply information technology to turn the classroom into an exciting and interesting place. In addition to traditional QQ group, the courses taught by the author also use a combination of teaching methods of “MOOC + Lan Mo Yun (LMY I short) + Pigai for Composition (Pigai in short) + Xi Chuan Listening (Xi Chuan in short)”.

MOOC is a product of “Internet + Education”, which provides a platform for students to learn independently after class. There are detailed video explanations, quizzes, writing guides and interactive platforms for teachers and students. The development of MOOC can break through time and space constraints, provide students with more information, broaden the horizons of students, help students learn more flexibly, share resources better, and promote the interactions between teachers and students, between students and students.

In LMY class, the application of technical means such as “brainstorming”, “group presentation”, “voting and questionnaire”, “quiz”, “answering and discussion” makes the classroom colorful and energetic. For example, in the “brainstorming” activity, each student can express his/her own opinion on the questions raised by the teachers, and can also view the point of views of other students in the class and praise the best one. This will encourage the active participation of every student. Even those who rarely speak in class have the opportunity to express their opinions. Teachers can ask students for further explanation in front of the whole class based on students’ voting.

PiGai and Xi Chuan provide a platform for students to practice their writing and listening skills. PiGai can provide suggestions in terms of spelling, grammar, wording, syntax, etc., score the essay submitted by each student, providing students with opportunities for continuous modification and improvement. Xi Chuan provides various exercises such as selection, blank-filling or dictation, and also tests with different levels, such as CET 4, CER 6 or professional English. Students have a wide choice according to their own needs.

The application of information technology in the classroom and after class makes the Internet no longer a devil for teachers and parents to talk about, but to become the best assistance and important carrier of classroom teaching, and even become an important part of classroom teaching.
Reform of College English Evaluation in “Internet +” Era

As for the reform of evaluation, the application of information technology can break the previous situation of “final examination is all” and “it’s up to the teacher”, making the evaluation more objective and scientific.

The author's class has fully utilized the evaluation techniques provided by LMY, which has realized the combination of online and offline students' mutual evaluation, students’ self-evaluation and teacher’s evaluation. It has conducted a multi-level, diversified, dynamic and scientific evaluation on students. Various means such as “group activities”, “quiz”, “voting and questionnaires” make the evaluation more stereoscopic and visual, and achieve the effects that traditional classrooms cannot achieve.

In the “quiz” activity, teachers can obtain statistical data in time after quiz test is over, monitor the correct rate of each question and the test situation of each student at any time, and find out the existing problem and give feedback to students in time. For example, in the course "Drama English", the students are asked to complete a quiz about "The Merchant of Venice" with a total of 10 items. After the quiz is over, the teacher can get feedback immediately. The teacher can visually check the correct rate of each question, the students’ ranking list (including scores, correct rates and time), the right-and-wrong of each question, the options distribution, etc., and can also know each student's answer to each item.

In these activities, teachers can better understand the specific performance of each student and provide timely feedback to help students in accordance with their aptitude. Students can also clearly understand their own learning status and level, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and set up a definite learning plan in their studies. The application of modern techniques and means can make classroom teaching more intuitive and efficient, greatly saving time and effort, and effectively promoting teacher-student interactions.

In the “group activities”, students can evaluate the activities of each group, including inter-group mutual evaluation and intra-group mutual evaluation. Before the class, the teachers set up the scoring standards for the group's mutual evaluation and self-assessment, which can clearly show a clear direction and guidance to students. In the evaluation process, students can not only score the activities of each group, but also conduct text or voice evaluations, expressing their opinions and suggestions. All evaluations are anonymous, and only teachers can view each student's evaluation, which can help students’ evaluation to be more objective.

This kind of activity is no longer decided only by the teacher's say, and this kind of evaluation is no longer only the teacher's decision. The class is handed over to the students and the students become an important part of the evaluation system. Students are not only the objects to be evaluated, but also the subjects to evaluate. The application of informationalized teaching methods can effectively stimulate the enthusiasm and initiative of students' participation in the classroom, and the evaluation process can not only promote the communication between the groups, but also stimulate the cooperation within the group.

Problems to Be Solved

As we all know, on one hand, education informatization is the necessary support for education modernization, but it cannot solve all the problems faced by education development. On the other hand, there is still a big gap between the construction of education informatization and that of the developed countries. This gap will exist objectively for a long time and cannot be improved in a short period of time [3]. Therefore, both teachers and students face many problems that need to be solved.

Firstly, students in online learning are prone to delays. Students’ learning is usually done alone on the Internet in a spare time. When the excitement begins, when difficulties appear, when other work and learning are busy, procrastination will occur. This is an important reason why many MOOC courses have low completion rates and pass rates.
Secondly, it’s not easy for students to be concentrated. In the network environment, there are so many temptations that it is almost impossible for students to keep up with the teacher’s teaching ideas for a long time. Therefore, teachers must monitor students’ learning timely and provide necessary help and suggestions, thus enhancing the student’s sense of substitution.

Thirdly, the quality of application software is uneven. How to screen, apply and supplement among a wide range of applications is a matter of careful consideration by teachers. For example, in the essay correction, the system cannot appreciate the writing style, evaluate the layout of article, and analyze the rhetorical techniques as teachers do. Thus, teacher’s view and scoring are still in need. In many cases, education informatization can only play a supporting and role.

Fourthly, strong equipment and technical support are needed. Otherwise, the teaching reform in the "Internet +" era becomes only a slogan. Unexpected situations such as server failures, poor network signals, and student’s phone failures require teachers to have sufficient on-the-spot resilience. Information technology can be fully utilized but not fully dependent.

Fifthly, under the impact of various technical means and concepts in the "Internet +" era, teachers can't stand still and need to constantly challenge themselves, change their ideas, change their roles, and learn knowledge and technology together with students in the tide of the times.

College English teaching in “Internet +” era can make full use of the virtual teaching platform, expand the resources of general education courses, enrich the classroom teaching form, enhance the interactive communication between teachers and students, improve the curriculum evaluation system, promote teaching efficiency and quality, and meet the needs of personalized education. This kind of teaching, consequently, can promote students’ self-directed learning, and help general education to achieve sublimation in informatization and renew its vitality.

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