Instructional Design of Online Pre-class Tasks of the Flipped Classroom on the Basis of ARCS Model

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Abstract. Instructional design of pre-class tasks is the key to the success of the flipped classroom. This paper discusses the application of ARCS model of motivational design in the instructional design of pre-class tasks of English listening and speaking course on the basis of U-MOOC Longman English learning platform, in order to improve the efficiency of flipped classroom teaching. To be more specific, the study shows that the four aspects of ARCS Model of motivation (attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction) exert different impacts on students’ motivation level.

1. Overview of ARCS Model

ARCS model of motivational design was put forward by an American scholar John M Keller, who integrated a variety of motivational research points of view in 1983 and proposed four key elements of motivational design model, that is, attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction, focusing on how to mobilize students’ motivation through teaching design [1]. This model is particularly important for distance education, since motivation seems to be a key factor that determines if learners complete their training. Motivation is a diametral responsibility for learners and teachers, and so it has to be boosted over the entire learning process respectively the developing of a learning environment.

In teaching design, ARCS motivational design model could be understood like this: first, to arouse learners’ attention and interests in order to motivate; second, to let the learners understand close relevance between themselves and the tasks; then to enable them have confidence to fulfill the tasks; finally have learners to experience a sense of accomplishment and content. The whole process is a dynamic cycle system.

With deep combination between information technology and subject teaching, today, many disciplines apply the development digital teaching. In this paper, we would take the digital teaching materials of Longman English Interactive as an example and discuss how to apply ARCS model in the pre-class design tasks of English listening and speaking course on the basis of U-MOOC. We would pay attention to the motivation of learners as well, in order to improve teaching effect.

2. Flipped Classroom and Pre-class Tasks

The development of information technology and the combination of subject teaching promote the spreading of flipped classrooms’ teaching mode. Before attending classes, students could complete the learning content through network, micro-class or learning platform [2]. And when the students have questions, teachers feel free to provide support or materials. In the class, students could fulfill their tasks and projects under the teachers’ guidance or in cooperation with classmates. Flipped classroom will move the traditional section which teachers teach to pre-class section, with the help of information technology, which makes pre-class design significant. The pre-class design of English speaking course has mainly the following reasons.

(1) The necessary input of language is the prerequisite for output. Through the pre-class design, students could complete the input section, getting well-prepared for the output.
(2) In the process of pre-class learning, teachers answer questions personally, using forums, instant messaging tools.

(3) Students could have their own pace instead of keeping same pace with others in the traditional classroom. By contrast, on the platform of MOOC, the teacher can set the overall learning progress. Before fulfilling pre-class tasks, students have the alternative to watch videos, hand in answers and assignments times repeatedly according to own learning levels and degrees.

(4) It enables and encourages students to engage in inquiry-based learning. Teachers play the role of conveying knowledge in the traditional classroom rather than the leaders in the process of learning in the flipped classroom due to the fact that learning require students’ self-study to complete the construction of knowledge through books concerned, network research and help of workmates.

3. Pre-class Tasks Design Based on ARCS Model

3.1 Attention

It is a prerequisite for individual learning to draw attention to the individual at the beginning of the activity [3]. Playing brief video which attract attention is always a nice way and continuous story can arouse students’ attention. Longman English Interactive (LEI) the third-level has 12 units and listening of each unit is a continuous story, which always makes a suspense for the next unit. Therefore, in the pre-class tasks of flipped classroom, the first activity would be watching videos, which includes: (1) Listening. Watch a picture and guess what is going to happen in this unit. (2) Listening for information. Answer questions according to the video. (3) Listening to ideas. Answer some questions on the theme or view.

3.2 Relevance

Learners could link new knowledge with the old one or the experience, and some of them may solve practical problems with new-obtained knowledge. So in the pre-class online tasks, students also design tasks towards consolidation and exploration after being attracted.

In the vocabulary section, new words would be selected into different categories concerned with the learned words and further explore. For example, the video say: “I’m in a bad mood.” Then practicing design will provide students with the emotional-related vocabulary classification, and use filling in the blank selection training to expand.

The grammar section selects out important grammar points that appear in the video of this unit, allowing students to review and consolidate and activate the icons already in the student’s mind. And then recall the content of the video, using learned grammar knowledge to fill in the blank or multiple choice practices. For instance, present tense, the way to make a proposal and the usage of too, enough and too hard to do, and some simple sentences and word usage as well appear in the dialogue in Unit 1. For first-year postgraduate students, although these are what they have learned, not everyone could use them properly in writing and speaking. Therefore, setting some review and practice tasks in the pre-class tasks is necessary for flipped classroom teaching and it is the foundation of right language input.

According to relevance in ARCS motivational design model, every unit has corresponding content and tasks, focusing on vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, which are fundamental to flipped classroom activity design.

3.3 Confidence

That is to enable students to feel that they have the ability to complete the tasks and believe they can succeed. When designing pre-class online tasks, we made the grade strategy more precise, with scores of unit activity, unit test and module test, forum discussion, online study performance and other parts. And according to the majority of students’ unit scores and test scores we will allow them redo as the score line is set to 70 points. Students could regulate own pace and fulfill online tasks, concerning own English study level. Students of lower degree can repeat the study and submit the answers until
they reach their satisfied level. While in the traditional classroom, teachers’ requirement on keeping
same pace make students of lower level hard to move on, feel frustrated, get fear and gradually lose
their interests in English learning.

In the learning process, the teacher will communicate with the students in time through the Wechat
application or QQ group in order to understand the needs and difficulties of the students, and provide
help or materials timely. Through online platform’s resources, teachers could upload the necessary
materials of support, and guide students to use Longman online dictionary and textbooks in the
-cultural notes in the platform as well, enabling students to complete pre-class learning tasks
efficiently. With adequate pre-class preparation, students could be well-prepared in the flipped
classroom with full confidence. Also, in pre-class tasks, according to each unit, pre-class forum
discussion is to be carried out from time to time, and we ask the students to support certain points of
view. The teacher will also respond to the questions raised by the students in the forum, and the
classmates can also ask and answer questions between each other. Pre-class tasks should be designed
to take full account of the difficulty of pre-class tasks for different degrees of students to enable
learners to enhance learning confidence through various means.

3.4 Satisfaction

Learners could obtain sense of accomplishment after finishing the tasks. In the process of online
activities design, teachers should give full consideration to this factor, and enable students to
experience the content of learning in terms of feedback and evaluation strategies. In the LEI pre-class
tasks design, parts of the activities of the system can automatically get score feedbacks, which is the
merit traditional classroom cannot compare, with students’ experience the happiness for getting
feedback timely. In the section of teachers’ feedback, like forum discussions and online assignments,
teachers would give pre-class feedback for students’ problems discovery. At the meantime, teachers
will share excellent design and typical design to the class in time, so that the students have
opportunities to learn from each other. In evaluation strategies, on the basis of MOOC platform,
formative evaluation would be applied, and the results of each unit will be included in the general
assessment of the semester. Students will have sense of the achievements as long as they make efforts.
This evaluation model is more objective and fair than the summative evaluation.

4. Conclusion

Pre-class online tasks deign is the key to the success of flipped classroom. In the English listening
and speaking teaching, the practice of input, that is, listening and reading are all migrated to online
pre-class tasks, and the activity design in class is the output section of speaking according to the
online study content. Students’ output of speaking and practice are difficult to achieve satisfactory
results without input of high efficiency. Hence, setting pre-class study tasks on the U-MOOC
platform based on ARCS model, which motivates students to learn, is the strong guarantee of flipped
classroom teaching.

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References

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