

Exploration and Practice of the "Four Dimensions to an Integration" Teaching Model of English in Higher Vocational Colleges

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Abstract: English teaching is an important part of higher vocational education system. Implementing the "four dimensions to an integration" teaching mode of vocational English helps students consolidate English foundation, improve cultural literacy, strengthen language thinking, and cultivate autonomous learning skills in higher vocational colleges.

1. Introduction

Higher vocational education is an important part of China's vocational education system. The modern vocational education system clearly requires higher vocational education to firmly establish the important position of vocational education in the national talent training system, meet the needs of economy and society for high-quality workers and skilled talents, and build a modern employment-oriented vocational education system. The healthy and orderly development of higher vocational education is of great significance to the establishment of the important position of China's vocational education in the national talent training system. The success of higher vocational English teaching, as an indispensable part of higher vocational education [1], in a sense, determines the goal of higher vocational education. The teaching goal of English in higher vocational colleges is to cultivate students' comprehensive ability to use practical English in the workplace environment [2], improve students' comprehensive cultural literacy and cross-cultural communication awareness, strengthen their learning interest and autonomous learning ability [3], and create conditions for strengthening students' professional competitiveness and sustainable development in the future. The world today is going through a great change that has not happened in a century. Facing the future, China will deepen opening up, especially strengthen extensive and in-depth cooperation with countries and regions along the "the Belt and Road". As a universal language, English is an important communication tool for international communication and cooperation. Under the new situation, we should actively explore new strategy and model of English teaching in higher vocational colleges, cultivate high-quality skilled talents with Chinese emotions and international vision to meet the requirements of the new era.

2. Teaching status

Due to the influence of various factors, the qualities of students in the vocational colleges are poor, the students' learning engagement is low, their satisfaction with learning and life is low, and their experience is poor [4]. Taking Shanghai Publishing and Printing College (SPPC) where the author works as an example, the students' English level varies due to the different origins and majors of students. Some students believe that the purpose of learning English in college is to pass CET-4 and CET-6, ignoring the global integration environment. In English learning they do not pay attention to the cultivation of comprehensive application abilities and autonomous learning abilities, lacking the enthusiasm and initiative of English learning, and an effective humanistic atmosphere for English learning has not formed. The students' basic language skills are not solid. Without effective oral and written communication skills, the students cannot effectively complete the communication tasks in daily life and under workplace situations. They cannot effectively acquire multicultural knowledge and deepen their understanding of Chinese culture through English learning, which causes the lack of cross-cultural skills to accurately and appropriately tell Chinese stories and spread Chinese culture in English. Most of the students are seriously anxious for quick success in English learning due to the influence of examination-oriented education. They fantasize about "becoming rich overnight", fail to establish a correct view of learning, and fail to develop good learning habits. "Dumb English" and "bottleneck English" have become an inharmonious voice and an unavoidable "curse" on the campus.

In addition to students' one-sided understanding of English learning objectives, the current unsatisfied situation of English teaching in higher vocational colleges is also caused by some teachers' outdated teaching concepts and insufficient teaching awareness. These teachers do not accurately understand the needs and requirements of the teaching objects, do not carefully analyze the actual level of the teaching objects, still adopted the non-differentiated teaching mode, stagnate in the teaching concept of "cramming", and are keen on teachers singing "monologue". Due to teaching orientation deviation, some teachers cannot adopt appropriate teaching materials and techniques based on the students' situations, resulting in a single and unpractical teaching method and evaluation method, and it is difficult to enhance the students' career development stamina. All this has led to the disconnection between students' English skills and the working scene, failing to effectively achieve the teaching objectives of higher vocational English.

3. Exploration and practice

Under the new situation, based on the core requirements of the modern vocational education system, English teaching in higher vocational colleges should explore new teaching models from four aspects of students' practical ability in the workplace, cross-cultural communication ability, language thinking ability and self-teaching ability and implement the "four dimensions to an integration" teaching model of English in higher vocational colleges to consolidate the language foundation, update the teaching content, improve critical thinking, teach oneself and perfect students. In view of the current stagnating situation of English teaching in higher vocational colleges, the English teaching team in SPPC does face the situation, and make efforts to find out the root cause of the current problems and related solutions. Foreign language teaching should follow the rule of "keeping on educational integrity and innovation". Integrity is the basis and guarantee of innovation, and in turns innovation is the leap and extension of integrity [5]. As for English teaching, to keep on educational integrity is to keep responsibility and to internalize talent training objectives into actual English teaching; and to keep on innovation is to adopt new educational concepts and methods to improve students' English skills, which will lay a solid foundation for students' career development.

First, focusing on the problem and finding the root cause. The teaching team designs a questionnaire for various current English learning and teaching problems to investigate the students' source structure, learning motivation, learning strategy, learning attitude, and learning achievement as well as the teachers' teaching concept, teaching strategy, teaching method, teaching mode, teaching research and self-evaluation in the similar colleges. Through the data statistics, data analysis and data comparison of 100% effective questionnaires for teachers and 89.8% effective questionnaires for students, the teaching team has mastered detailed first-hand data and found the root cause of the problem. On this basis, the teaching team has formulated a targeted "four dimensions for an integration" teaching mode of English in higher vocational colleges.

Secondly, strengthening "four dimensions" and implementing "an integration". "The first dimension" refers to consolidating students' English language foundation. The teaching team adheres to the basic principle of practicality. Through detailed analysis and positioning of students' actual language level, the teachers adopt multimedia technology that is popular with students, and implement the teaching method of "two-way interaction" between teacher and students, students and students by means of "flipped classroom" to strengthen students' basic language skills, and consolidate the English language foundation. "The second dimension" means innovating teaching materials. As for English teaching, the teaching team innovates the teaching contents of "textbooks" based on the actual language level of "talents", optimizes and adds relevant teaching materials, and strengthens the comparative study of similarities and differences between Chinese and English languages. "The third dimension" emphasizes strengthening students' language thinking capability. Language thinking is the key to improve language practice, and English thinking ability is an important part of English comprehensive quality. In teaching, all members of the teaching team give full play to the role of the classroom, and create a "mini salon" platform to guide students to put forward their own opinions and judgments on the preset topics, which can encourage students to conduct multiple thinking activities in English from multiple perspectives to further expand students' English thinking space, thus improving students' English appreciation and evaluation ability. "The fourth dimension" refers to improving students' autonomous learning skills. The acquisition of English language is a long-term internalization process under the subconscious, and the initiative of students is the fundamental and key to the acquisition of language. Teachers guide students to understand and identify the rules of language learning in the form of "language salon", "mini forum" and other platforms, thus developing good self-teaching habits. The "four dimensions" are obviously different and interrelated to each other. The "four dimensions" are inextricably and organically integrated into "an integration", which is to achieve the goal of cultivating skilled talents. In the new era, new requirements and new background, the "four dimensions to an integration" teaching model has well interpreted the educational function of vocational English.

Finally, strengthening teachers' self-cultivation and perfecting the teaching evaluation mechanism. The "four dimensions to an integration" English teaching model, which forms an organic whole, stresses students' learning. To maximize the effect of the teaching model, teachers' own innovative spirit and the spirit of the times are also crucial. Teachers' "teaching" and students' "learning" should be organically unified. Teachers should update their teaching concepts, carry out relevant teaching research in a "self-examination" way. As a result, they can promote scientific research with teaching and guide teaching with scientific research, thus improving their own teaching and research ability. To some extent, teachers' self-cultivation determines the success or failure of teaching. In the era of the rapid development of the Internet, teachers should establish the concept of information-based teaching, master the media, network and other technologies, actively seek new entry points of "Internet + Higher Vocational English" teaching. Through "MOOC", "Micro class", "cloud teaching platform", and "Flipped Classroom", teachers could provide students

with a real, open, interactive and cooperative teaching environment at the right time. It's clear that an important "dimension" is that teachers help students understand and master the laws of English language acquisition, and improve students' autonomous learning skills, which require teachers to perfect the evaluation mechanism about students learning, strengthen students' process learning, respect students' individual differences. Thus, an evaluation mechanism that combines process and final performance can contribute to students' learning autonomy. Taking SPPC for example, the college adopts the evaluation mechanism that combines the process assessment (including in-class performance, homework quality, participation effect, etc.) accounting for 60% and the final performance (final examination) accounting for 40%, which has greatly stimulated the students' learning enthusiasm and set a strong English learning atmosphere, especially the students' spontaneous daily "morning reading" activity has become a beautiful scenery on the campus.

4. Teaching effectiveness

Practice has proved that the exploration and practice of the "four dimensions to an integration" teaching mode of higher vocational English has played a positive role in the improvement of both students' core competence of English discipline and the development of teachers themselves. First of all, the "four dimensions to an integration" teaching model gives English teaching new connotation and extension. The goal of higher vocational English education is to improve students' practical ability in English in the workplace environment. Such abilities to use English has greatly enriched and expanded the core and extension of higher vocational English teaching. Secondly, the "four dimensions to an integration" teaching mode emphasizes the integration of the "four dimensions". The students' abilities in workplace communication, cross-cultural communication, language thinking and self-teaching are both different from each other and interrelated to each other, which constitute the core of scientific literacy in vocational English teaching. Thirdly, the exploration and practice of the "four dimensions to an integration" teaching model provides a plan for English curriculum in higher vocational colleges to display Chinese culture. Clearly, Language not only serves culture and but also is the carrier of culture. It is one of the important missions for higher vocational English teaching to tell Chinese stories well in English and display Chinese culture in English. Fourth, the "four dimensions to an integration" teaching model effectively realizes the same "vibration" of both teachers and students. Teachers' "teaching" and students' "learning" constitute the organic unity of English teaching activities in higher vocational colleges. Different from the previous teaching reform, the "four dimensions to an integration" teaching mode requires both teachers and students to make innovations simultaneously. Finally, based on the exploration and practice of the "four dimensions to an integration" teaching model, a new vocational English learning model can be created. It is necessary to change with the times, change with the situation, and change with the facts. With the help of the "four dimensions to an integration" teaching mode, the new teaching and learning modes such as "two-way interaction", "flipped classroom", "in-class class", "micro-class", "mini salon", "mini forum", "classics reading", etc., take the lead and maximize the teaching effect of higher vocational English from different angles.

The "four dimensions to an integration" teaching mode is a main student-oriented mode. From the perspective of learning rather than teaching, it not only requires students to master the basic knowledge of English, consolidate the language foundation, but also attaches importance to the development of practical ability of English and improvement of comprehensive cultural literacy. Taking SPPC as an example, the overall English teaching level has been greatly improved and the language settings has come into being through the large-scale implementation of the "four dimensions to an integration" teaching model throughout the college. Students actively participate

in all kinds of English competitions at all levels and are full of confidence. The related awards are getting higher and higher; more and more students have taken part in the international activities of some enterprises, and have been highly praised by the employers. Similarly, the scientific research level and professional quality of teachers have improved significantly. The situation of taking English as the starting point to promote the overall level of higher vocational education has emerged.

5. Conclusion

In order to satisfy the needs of vocational students' future career development and the specific requirements of their jobs for English, it is imperative to explore and practice the reform of vocational English teaching. It is believed that with more practices the exploration of the "four dimensions to an integration" teaching mode of higher vocational English will become more reasonable and more effective, and it will promote the rapid development of the whole higher vocational education, and finally help to achieve the goal of vocational education.

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