A Study of the Application of Superstar Online Course Platform in the Context of "Internet +"

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Abstract: In the era of "Internet + Education", various online course platforms have brought opportunities and challenges to the reform of English teaching in private colleges and universities. Teachers from the School of Foreign Languages in Wuhan College of Arts and Sciences have opened online courses on the Superstar online course platform according to the requirements of the "Implementation Plan for Accelerating the Promotion of Educational Modernization policy". Therefore, this paper starts the study of the application of online teaching platform in Comprehensive English Course 2 in Wuhan College of Arts and Sciences to analyze the teaching effect.

1. Introduction

"Internet + Education" is a modern education concept proposed according to the "Implementation Plan for Accelerating the Promotion of Education Modernization policy" issued by the State Council in China. In order to comply with this trend, many English majors in private colleges and universities are actively using information platforms to offer Internet courses to improve teaching quality and teaching efficiency.[1] Online teaching based on the network platform has been the focus of teaching reform in many private colleges and universities in recent years. Superstar online course platform is a learning platform developed by Superstar Information Technology Company based on big data and cloud computing technology.[2] This free platform is easy to operate and therefore it attracts many colleges and universities as its users.

The teaching of the Superstar Online Course Platform mainly relies on the smart application on the mobile phone, the smart application on the tablet and the online learning website on the computer to provide online teaching services for teachers and students. The mobile teaching system of this platform provides teachers with a variety of teaching services. It offers services such as micro-class recording, online testing, homework auto-correction, discussion forums, electronic courseware, etc. Students can use the diverse resources of the platform to expand their own learning anytime and anywhere, and check their own learning results anytime and anywhere. Many colleges and universities have used this platform to carry out free online teaching based on recording and live broadcasting.

2. The Online Course Design

The author offered the online course (Comprehensive English Course 2) on the Superstar online course platform in the fall semester of 2019. Teaching materials uploaded on the platform include 20-minute-micro-videos, course slides, electronic courseware, audio, online reading material, unit tests and topic discussions. The course takes the form of micro-video to make the content of the course more micro-integrated.[3] This kind of micro-aggregated learning materials can significantly improve the learning efficiency and sense of accomplishment of students in private colleges with relatively weak language proficiency. This course includes 16 independent units, and each unit consists of 5 20-minute micro-teaching videos. At the end of each unit, there is a unit test, a unit exercise, an extended reading material and an anonymous discussion after class.

The discussion board allows teachers to post after-class questions, and students can not only share their opinions but also interact with their teachers and other students. The activity function of the

platform can also allow teachers to randomly investigate the understanding of students by means of quiz game, sigh-in, etc. These functions can help students make full use of fragmented time for more active self-learning.[4] Superstar online course platform breaks the traditional passive teacher-centered teaching mode. It stimulates the subjective initiative of students in private universities and cultivates their habit of independent self-learning.

Teachers can use the statistical function of Superstar Online Course Platform to check the learning progress and learning effect of students after class. The statistical function of the platform is equipped with study time count, total test score, assignment completion statistics, and classroom management modules. Teachers can fully grasp the classroom activity and learning progress of students. Conversely, these data can also help teachers reflect on the course design to further optimize the curriculum. These teaching management mode and curriculum evaluation mechanisms which are based on big data technology generate a smart modernized ecological class mode. This smart modernized ecological class mode requires that the leading position of teachers, the dominant position of students and the ecological teaching environment are mutually coordinated and unified.[5] The statistical function of the learning platform perfectly realizes the unification of those three.

3. Research Methods

The author opened the Comprehensive English Course 2 on the platform for a total of 252 students this semester and divided them into 7 virtual teaching classes. Teachers released a total of 336 interactive tasks on the platform this semester, and the teacher-student interaction rate was up to 97.8%. The author published a questionnaire online at the end of the semester to study the teaching effect of online courses. Afterwards, a total of 252 valid questionnaires were received. The questionnaire is composed of 9 open-ended questions and sent to each respondent in an anonymous form by a link. Questions 1-3 of the questionnaire surveyed the online class equipment used by the students, students' residences and the students' favorite online course materials. Question 4 investigates the learning atmosphere of online courses; Question 5 requires students to vote for their favorite interaction form; Question 6 investigates the degree of students' understanding of knowledge after class; Question 7 collects the biggest gains students get from online courses. Questions 8 and 9 compare the characteristics of online classrooms that are most popular with students and the characteristics that are least popular with students compared to traditional classrooms. The results of the questionnaire analysis are as follows.

4. Data Analysis

The questionnaire is posted on the Questionnaire Star tool. All the data are automatically processed by this tool. According to question 1-3, it can be found that the vast majority of students use mobile phones for online learning. Secondly, some students use tablets, and a very small number of students use computers. It may be inferred from this that students prefer to choose more portable tools rather than larger screen tools when they are having online classes. It is very interesting that the recorded video has overwhelmingly won the love of students. The second most popular online course material is slides and then live broadcasts. From the data collected in Question 4, it can be seen that most people believe that compared to traditional classrooms, online classrooms have a relatively less active classroom atmosphere. The result of Question 5 shows that the students' favorite ways to interact in online classrooms are discussion and anonymous questioning. The data in Question 6 shows that most students think that they do not have a high level of knowledge understanding after online classes. Question 7 found that the biggest gain for students after online classes is that online classes have helped improve their self-learning ability and cultivate the habit of self-learning.

The course teaching materials mainly include recorded videos of teacher's lectures and lecture slides for students to learn the course by themselves. Questions 8 and 9 are designed to test students' preferences of these 2 types of learning materials. The author has done a cross-analysis of the preferences of the students towards 2 different online learning materials, and the results are shown in

the table 1 and table 2. Table 1 has gathered the most popular features of online course based on students' answers. And table 2 has displayed the least popular features of online course. Most students said that the biggest advantage of video and slides is that there are no time and space constraints, and students can freely conduct fragmented self-study anytime and anywhere. Quite a few students believe that the feature of repeatable video playback is also more advantageous than traditional classrooms. Online course platform does show many advantages that traditional classrooms do not have in English teaching. In general, online education has the following advantages: (1)Online classes break the time and place restrictions and meet the individual needs of different students. (2)The platform provides students with a wealth of learning materials, transforming the classroom from a traditional teacher-centered classroom to a student-oriented classroom.(3)The assignments, quizzes and discussion activities provided by the platform have greatly stimulated students' interest in self-learning.
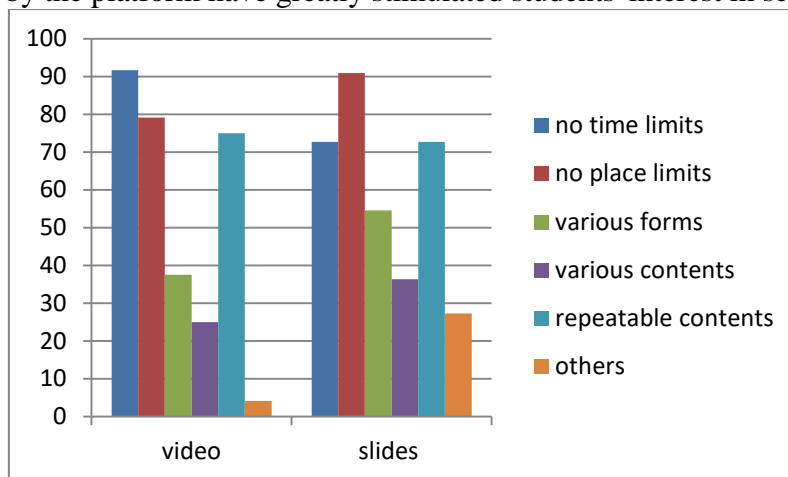

Table 1. The most popular features of online classes compared to traditional classes

According to the results of the questionnaire survey, the online courses on the Superstar online course platform also have certain limitations. (1)Most students report that due to the lack of direct intervention from teachers, students may do things that are not related to learning during class.(2)Some students indicated that compared with traditional classrooms, students are unable to communicate directly with teachers face-to-face immediately. The recording and broadcasting on online learning platform has led to a time lag in the interaction between teachers and students. (3)Many students said that online courses have certain requirements for equipment and network, which is a disadvantage, compared to the hardware requirements of traditional classrooms. Therefore, teachers need to consider these shortcomings and develop more flexible strategies to solve the above problems.
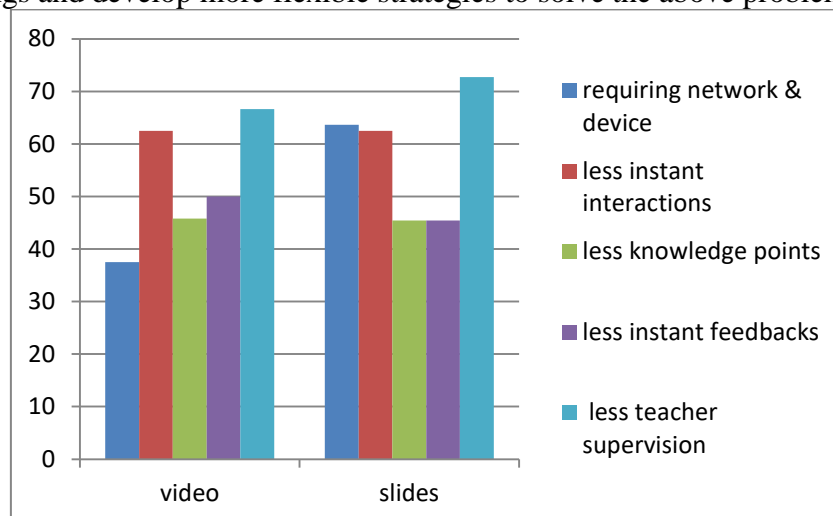

Table 2. The least popular features of online classes compared to traditional classes

5. Reflections and Conclusions

In summary, online course platform has many advantages that traditional classrooms cannot match. Private colleges and universities should continue to use online courses as a supplement to traditional classrooms in future English courses. At the same time, the online course platform also has certain limitations. Teachers should strengthen the supervision of students when using the platform for auxiliary teaching and adjust the teaching arrangements in time according to the feedback of the students. All in all, the online teaching platform can make up for the limitations of the traditional language teaching model to a large extent, and is conducive to creating a more diversified foreign language classroom.

In the context of "Internet +", in addition to applying modern information technology platforms in classroom teaching. Teachers should also use information technology to build a multi-dimensional and dynamic evaluation system for students' learning. In addition to testing students' language knowledge, teachers should also incorporate students' learning attitudes, interactive participation, and critical thinking into the curriculum evaluation system. In addition to traditional examination evaluation methods, teachers can also use the big data technology of the online course platform to intervene in students' pre-class activities and after-class activities, and form procedural evaluations of students through online tests, group activities, forum discussions and other online activities. Teachers can also post student self-evaluation and student mutual evaluation on the online course platform. Modern information technology can make teachers' evaluation of students become more and more vivid, accurate and intelligent.

The construction of online classrooms is the key to improving college English education. Online classroom breaks the time and space limitations of traditional offline classrooms. Online education makes knowledge ubiquitous. At the same time, offline classrooms also have some unmatched advantages while online classrooms do not possess. Therefore, teachers must construct an interactive teaching mode that achieves an ecological balance between online and offline classrooms. Under the guidance of the concept of "Internet+", the emergence of online classrooms not only conforms to the trend of social development, but also improves students' creativity and lifelong learning ability, and realizes the sustainable development of English education.

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