Interactive Training Mode for College English Teachers with Information and Communications Technology

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Abstract: College English is an important part of higher education, and the quality of teachers directly affects the College English teaching. At present, college English teacher training is a tough task. The traditional teacher training mode can not meet the needs of teachers' future career in the information era. It is reasonable, necessary and feasible to use Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teacher education and training. This paper is to construct a college English teacher training mode based on ICT, using different means of information technology synthetically, to create an ideal environment for English teachers to improve their teaching, meeting their need of further development as soon as possible.

1. Introduction

Educational informationization refers to the process of using modern information technology in education, exploiting educational resources and optimizing educational process to cultivate and improve students' information ability and promote educational modernization. Since 2001, there has been an upsurge in the construction of educational informationization in China. Substantive progress has been made in software and hardware platforms, and information technology application. Information and communications technology (ICT) are regarded an extensional term for information technology, which stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications and computers, as well as necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage, and audiovisual systems, enabling users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information. ICT also refers to the convergence of audiovisual and telephone networks with computer networks through a single cabling or link system.

An important content of educational informationization is to speed up the construction of teachers' educational informationization and to cultivate teachers' attainment in information. The online training of teachers is not only an important part of educational informationization, but also an important force to promote its construction. At the same time, ICT which takes multimedia computer and Internet as the core, not only provides the material basis for the cultivation of students, but also becomes an important tool for teachers to learn. More importantly, it triggers profound changes in teacher training in terms of concept, content and methods. Therefore, the application of ICT will make profound changes in the teacher training, and plays an important role in promoting teachers'quality in China.

With the new challenges posed by science and technology, the urgent need for teachers in various countries has gradually shifted from the quantity focused to the quality focused. There is an unprecedented concern for teachers' quality. The key role of teachers in the reform of Chinese education has gradually been widely recognized. The development of higher education needs qualified teaching staff. As a special group of language teachers, college English teachers themselve will directly determine whether college English education can meet the requirements of the new era. At the same time, they also determine the quality of college English teaching. It is necessary to

cultivate qualified English teachers, therefore, to combine teacher training with ICT is an important way for teachers' professional development.

2. The construction of College English Teacher Training Mode with ICT

College English teacher training can be divided into two categories: one is the traditional face-to-face training organized by colleges and teacher training institutions, the other is the teacher training using information technology. The two types have the same goal, both for academic and non-academic purposes, but they have the different technical means. In the traditional face-to-face classroom training, only a few people have the opportunity to learn excellent courses, while with ICT, anyone can get acess to the instruction online. Moreover, the trainees can arrange their learning pace independently and control the learning time freely. The emergence of ICT has changed the traditional English teacher training mode. Using ICT to train teachers can break through the limitations of traditional face-to-face training. It provides trainees with a new learning method which is flexibile, resource-sharing, and interactive. College English teacher training via ICT is not constrained by time and space, trainees can choose the best time, the best place to learn, which effectively ensures good training results.

The college English teacher training mode with ICT in this paper mainly includes three parts: the transmission of training information, training support services and training management.

2.1 The Transmission of Training Information

In this college English teacher training mode with ICT, the transmission of training information can be made through synchronous and asynchronous interaction. These two interactions have both their own advantages and disadvantages to complement each other in the mode. A blend of synchronous and asynchronous modes is more desirable for English teacher training.

Synchronized interaction, also known as real-time training, refers to the real-time training of teachers given by lecturers directly through the network. Lecturers and trainees can see each other and communicate with each other simultaneously through the network. Lecturers give lessons in the broadcasting room, while trainees listen to lectures in multimedia classrooms all over the country. Trainees can ask lecturers questions, and lecturers can answer questions immediately through the network. This form mainly consists of lectures by trainers and the lecturing is combined with pictures inserting and audio-visual materials. In the process of synchronous interaction, lecturers give priority to consulting, guiding and question answering, and guide trainees' learning strategies rather than taking the traditional cramming. More importantly, multimedia audio and video information can be transmitted and online real-time interactive training can be realized with broadband access. Trainees have strong autonomy, flexibility in the training with high efficiency and good effect.

Asynchronous interaction, also known as non-real-time training, refers to that lecturers' release training materials to students through the network and trainees can learn at any time and place after receiving training materials, or that the real-time training information was downloaded to the local servers at teaching points for trainees to browse and learn. Trainees can use the multimedia and network to call the stored electronic courseware integrated with images, sounds as well as teaching guidance for learning, and they can control their learning pace autonomously. There is also another asynchronous interaction, which is an autonomous distance training mode based on the Internet. It is a completely non-real-time training mode. The training content of this mode is presented in the form of hypertext documents and interactive network courseware. It is stored in the network center server. The trainees can receive training not only in the training centers, but also at home. The trainees can call it at any time through the multimedia and communication network. These course WebPages are designed according to the training content, and they integrate images, audio, video, and words in a vivid form. The trainees can use interactive network to review the training content they have learned whenever and wherever they can.

2.2 The Training Support Services

In college English teacher training mode with ICT, lecturers and trainees are separated in time and space, so training support service has become the key factor to guarantee good training quality. Training support services include tutoring and answering questions, assignments, and examinations.

Trainers and trainees can communicate in real-time or non-real-time mode. There are three forms of online tutoring and question answering: using video conferencing system, BBS forum, and e-mail. Video conferencing system can be used for questioning and answering in each course, and the main lecturer will answer questions from all trainees in the broadcasting room. Trainees can use the multi-media and communication network to submit questions via e-mail. Lecturers will also answer their questions by e-mail. If a lecturer has established a BBS answering site, trainees can visit the site to ask questions, and lecturers can give answers. At the same time, this site can also be used as a place for trainers and trainees to exchange learning experience. If necessary, lecturers can also store references on the site for trainees to call.

The trainers assign some homework during the course. The trainees can submit homework online within the prescribed time, which can be documents with video, pictures, and voice. Trainers can comment on trainees' homework online, make corrections, trace and record their learning progress in time, and give timely feedback to them, so that the trainees can improve their learning, to complete more meaningful knowledge construction. The homework submitted by the trainees and the lecturers' comments will be kept back permanently. Both trainers and trainees can check it at any time. Trainees can review their homework and discuss it with the lecturers. A good test bank for teachers' training need to be established. For courses with the standard exam, the online exam is used. The trainees in each multimedia classroom can take the online exam at the same time. For courses with the non-standardized exam, the online exam database can be used to randomly assign testing questions, and the trainees can choose their time and place for the exam.

2.3 The Training Administration and Management

Training administration and management system plays an important role in online training. It can realize the modernization and standardization of the whole training management process, and can timely and accurately reflect the current training situation and analyze the training effect. It features in training resources allocating, training activity organizing and data collecting, to promote the smooth implementation of training with ICT.

Training administration and management includes the management of lecturers, trainees, and training resources.The management of lecturers is mainly to introduce the key information of the trainees to the trainees. The trainees can get the basic information of the trainers, and then choose the courses they want to study. The management of trainees is mainly on-line management of the main information of trainees, such as registration, course selection, textbook selection, counseling, and other management functions. The management of resources is to provide trainees with many useful learning resources through FTP resource library, network navigation library, autonomous learning courseware, and simultaneous broadcast of video and lecture notes with related learning synchronization support. It can also offer non-real-time training resources, course videos and other resources with ICT, making the selection of training subjects very wide. Moreover, it can realize the personalized learning system for trainees with different proficiency, according to their learning progress. Besides, dynamic adjustment of training content, collaborative problem solving and adaptive learning strategy are available to the trainees.

3. Conclusion

College English teacher training Mode with ICT is to meet teachers' continuing and lifelong educational needs. However, there are still some problems to be solved in the process of constructing this teacher training mode. These problems mainly include the construction of training platform, the integration of training resources and the construction of training support service system.

Firstly, we should actively adopt new technologies and multi-media in the overall design. In the Internet era, the development of teacher training must keep up with the development of information technology, and make good use of the information transmission infrastructure such as computer network, telecommunication network and digital satellite television network. In addition, it is necessary to promote education informationization and distance teacher training at different levels, and explore the teacher training network suitable for different regions in China. As a matter of fact, broadband networks are temporarily inaccessible in some Western regions, and underdeveloped regions. Even with the broadband, teacher training cannot depend on one network only.

Secondly trainers should be proficient in modern information technology and integrate it into training. Undoubtedly, most trainers are not specializing in network teaching. When developing online training courses, trainers are disconnected from curriculum development, because trainers are mainly responsible for the compilation of textbooks, while computer technicians take the charge of the construction of online courses.

Thirdly emphasis should be laid on guiding and providing support services to trainees who carry out self-regulated learning, and the corresponding incentive mechanism should be established. If the trainees in their self-regulated learning lack the learning environment of mutual communication and interaction, their learning enthusiasm and learning effect will be affected to a certain extent. In practice, the teaching resources have not fully satisfied the needs of trainees' individualized self-regulated learning yet, and trainers cannot offer adequate input in training support service, either.

Establishing an interactive training mode for college English teachers is a dynamic process of gradual development, which demands researchers to explore, summarize and improve constantly. With the contribution of the above suggestions, the performance of the trainees is expected to be better. Further research should be done to explore the scope and suitability of using ICT to make the college English teacher training more interactive and accessible.

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