

The Application of Mind Mapping To College English Teaching

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Keywords: Mind map, Teaching design, Text analysis

Abstract: In the traditional classes of college English teaching, the teaching designs were usually lack of uniqueness and global coherence. And the past focus of text analysis was the teaching of vocabulary and grammar teaching. This paper attempts to enhance the students' ability of discourse analysis, and finally to improve their comprehensive English ability by applying the mind map to teaching design and text analysis.

1. Introduction

It's known to all that the teaching design is of great importance for college English teaching. However, there are some problems existing in the teaching design such as the similarity of each unit, the lack of definite organizational coherence in the classroom. The fact is that some of the designs are not in line with the learning law. In addition, the past focus of text analysis was the teaching of vocabulary and grammar without paying high attention to the students' analysis, thinking and summary of the overall structure. Thus, the students' interest in English learning and the quality of English teaching would be greatly reduced. At present, the college English teaching is facing the renewal and replacement. Therefore, we need to adopt new methods for innovating the college English teaching in such a new era. The mind map is currently viewed as an effective tool for information analysis, extraction and summary because of its visual impact of graphics and words. It can not only guide the teachers to carry out the high-quality teaching design in the classroom, but also improve the students' overall cognitive level regarding the text.

2. Research on Mind Map

In the 1960s, Tony Bozan, who is a British psychologist and educator put forward the concept of Mind Map. In his book *Mind Map: Radioactive thinking*, he asserts that the mind map is a very useful graphic technology and a universal key to open up the potential of the brain. Mind maps can be used in all aspects of life, and the enhanced learning ability and clear way of thinking will improve the people's behaviors.

A mind map is usually a multi-colored diagram displayed on a large sheet of paper, containing words and images that are connected in various ways. The information on a mind map is arranged intuitively according to the importance of the concepts. Through the rich and colorful graphics, lines and characters, the mind map can sum up, analyze and summarize the knowledge points, thus making the invisible knowledge visible and intuitive, enhancing the students' overall cognitive ability and improving their innovative ability of thinking. The mind map can perfectly simulate the thinking mode of brain, combine the logical thinking of left brain with the image thinking of right brain, and help the students to develop their different abilities in a balanced way. With these advantages, the students' enthusiasm for English learning can be obviously stimulated and their confidence in studying English well can be established.

Based on the above advantages of mind mapping, many teachers and researchers in China begin to apply the mind map to the college English teaching. Hence, the application of mind mapping has been greatly developed both in theory and in practice. For instance, in the *Mind Mapping: New Path of Optimizing Classroom Teaching* and *A Study on the Application of Hand-drawn Mind Map in College English Reading Teaching Design*, Yan Shouxuan and Yue Meirong both apply the mind map to English teaching design and elaborate its distinctive superiorities.^{[1][2]} In *The Application of*

Mind Map in Reading Teaching for English majors--Taking Advanced English Course Teaching as an Example, Wang Anna holds the view that the mind map can optimize the classroom teaching methods, improve the interaction of the classroom and change the boring state of classroom. It is concluded that the mind map is an auxiliary means to integrate knowledge points and efficient memory. [3]

3. Application of Mind Mapping in College English

As a compulsory course for non-English majors, the college English includes a wide range of contents and diverse genres, requiring the students to master the background knowledge, vocabulary, logical thinking, text understanding, divergent ways of thinking and so on. As the mind map can visually sort out these knowledge points, students can quickly simplify the difficult reading materials and improve their learning effect. The author selects *E English Course 3 (Third Edition)* as the research object, and applies the mind map to the college English teaching.

3.1 Application of Mind Mapping to Teaching Design

Classroom teaching is a dynamic process of bilateral participation of teachers and students. In the classroom, the students are the main body while the teachers are the designers, organizers and guides. Since a scientific and reasonable teaching design is the premise of teaching links of the whole teaching process, we must make sure the design can meet the needs of students' physical and mental development. The following teaching design for the *E English Course 3 (Third Edition)* can help the students to master the contents of the texts quickly and effectively.

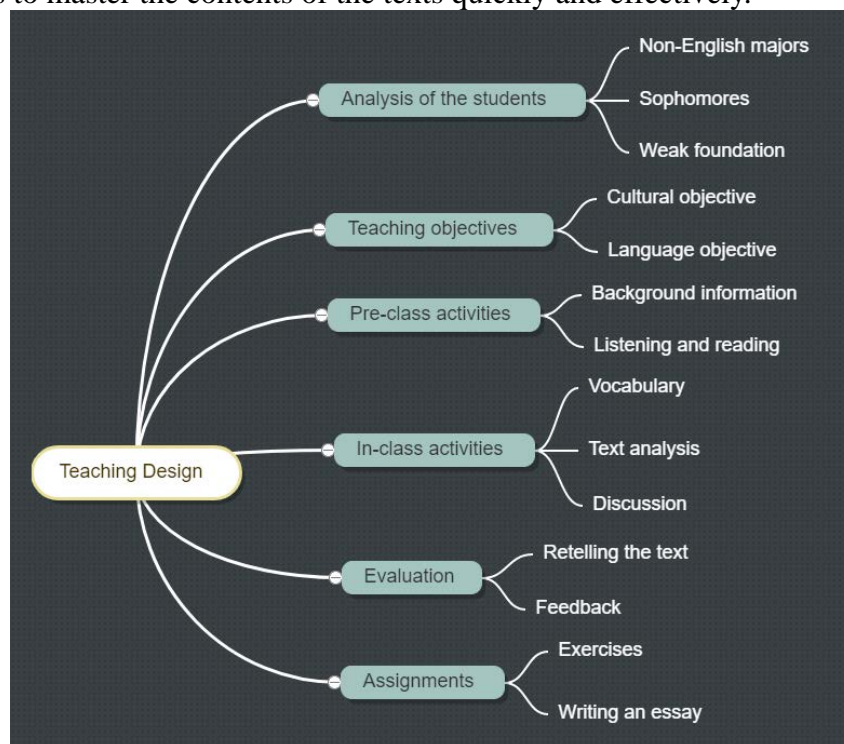


Fig.1 Teaching Design

Based on Figure 1, we can see there are two advantages of mind mapping in teaching design. First of all, the mind map can clearly and systematically present learning situation analysis, teaching objectives and teaching process. The orderly development of classroom teaching design is the product of interaction among multiple teaching elements. The development of students' autonomous learning, cooperative learning and exploratory learning should be put in the first place in the class. Second, it is easier to highlight the key and difficult points by using the mind map to assist the teaching design. When drawing a mind map, the use of images, colors and symbols are recommended. The difficult language points are marked with different colors, fonts and lines, thus quickly attracting the students to focus on what the teacher wants to emphasize. The aims of

adopting the mind map in teaching design are to achieve the optimization of teaching effect and truly implement the teaching essence and educational concept of college English.

3.2 Application of Mind Mapping to Text Analysis

Since the mind map is a visual representation or diagram of information that has a central idea surrounded by connected branches of associated topics, it can realize the true reading and extension of teaching. After the completion of reading and teaching activities, the teacher may use the mind map to summarize and consolidate the content. It can also assist the students to learn the key points through the form of questions and answers. Take the Unit 6 *Coffee Culture* as an example. The following diagram is the basic kind of mind map for sorting out the structure of text. Actually, if you want to make your mind map vivid, you can also add some simple and colourful paintings alongside the words.

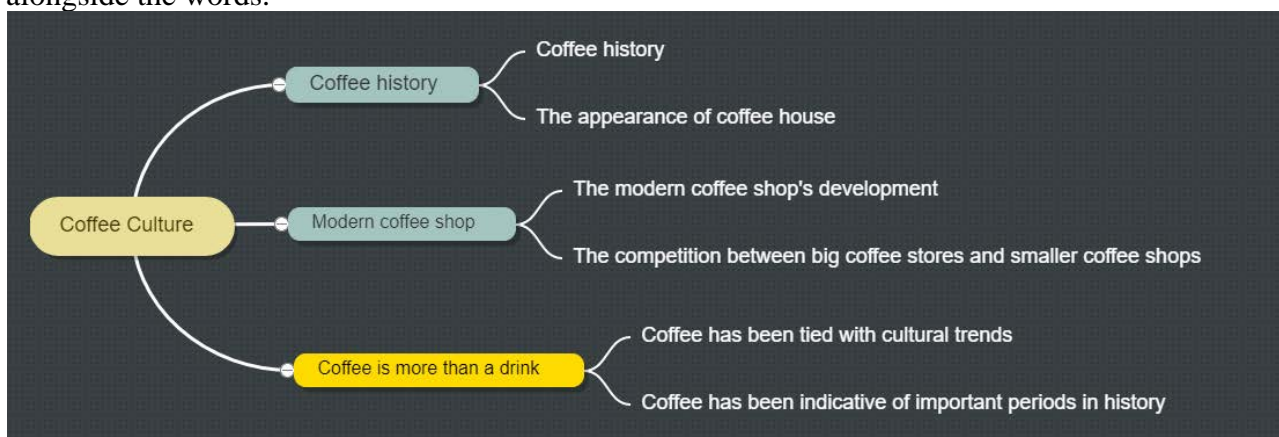


Fig.2 Unit 6 Coffee Culture

What's more, we can use this map to guide the students to draw their own mind maps. There is no fixed format for the mind map, which is relatively free. And the styles and contents drawn by the students are different, which can effectively arouse the students' senses of participation in the classroom and senses of achievement in their study. The students could be divided into five or six groups. Each group is required to integrate the information given in the text into a mind map, helping the other groups to understand the development history of coffee at a glance. Then a representative selected by each group may try to retell the text in their own words with the help of their own mind maps.

There are three characters in applying the drawing of mind mapping to text learning. First, it can establish the connection between language and meaning. The mind map takes the keywords as the nodes, which helps the students to establish the relationship between language form and the content of thinking through the surface text. Second, it can refine the text structure and make it visual. The mind map condenses a long passage into a concise thinking diagram, thus the students can set up a sense of macro layout. Third, the students can grasp exactly the author's thinking path. The mind map uses the lines to establish a hierarchical relationship, thus the students can see the logical relationship of author's train of thought, and master the writing methods and skills quickly.

4. Conclusion

By drawing a mind map in a teaching design, the teacher can effectively determine the teaching content, clarify the whole process, rhythm and objectives of students' learning activities, and improve the students' target level of learning. According to the hierarchy of a mind map, the teacher can design the main content and secondary content of teaching. The benefits brought by the mind map are: on the one hand, it can arouse the students' enthusiasm for study; on the other hand, it can strengthen student's creative thinking and bring up student's creative ability.

The rich vocabulary, huge amount of information, numerous background knowledge in the

English reading materials are the stumbling blocks which hinder the students from reading effectively. It may cause the students to produce a reading anxiety. In view of this, it is necessary for the teacher to use the mind map to transform all kinds of text information into visual expressions and impart a large amount of information in a clear form to the students. Therefore, the mind map is very important and effective for the students' intelligence development in English learning. The mind map can not only teach the students a new way to learn English, but also a new way to think; it can not only stimulate the infinite potential of students' brain, but also help them to combine listening, speaking, reading and writing in college English learning.

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