

THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COLLEGE ENGLISH INFORMATIZATION TEACHING: A TASK-BASED ENGLISH LESSON

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ABSTRACT: *Conducting informatization teaching design has become an important issue for college English teachers in China. Owing to task-based teaching method is consistent with the concept of informatization teaching design, a task-based college oral English lesson was designed for the freshmen majoring in International Trade in a vocational college. This paper illustrates the design and implementation of college English informatization teaching from four aspects including teaching analysis, teaching strategies, teaching procedures and teaching evaluation. The task-based informatization teaching design and implementation highlights the students' oral English application ability and cross-cultural communication ability. During the teaching process, the teacher and the students interacted with each other very well through the task-based activities, thus the teaching effect was significantly improved. However, some problems were discovered in this lesson, the teacher conducted teaching reflection and figured out the solutions to the problems in the follow-up teaching.*

KEYWORDS: informatization teaching design; task-based teaching method; college English; vocational colleges

INTRODUCTION

With the development of China's economy and society, it is an inevitable choice to fully applying technological innovation in education. And enhancing teaching informatization in an all-round way has become a major trend in the development of vocational education. College English, as an important public elementary course in the curriculum system of vocational colleges, the realization of its informationized teaching will have a significant impact on both teaching philosophy and learning philosophy. Therefore, how to carry out information-based teaching design has become a big issue for college English teachers in vocational colleges.

Task-based teaching method is consistent with the concept of informatization teaching design

It is obvious that there are many similarities between the requirements of task-based teaching method and informatization teaching design. Informatization teaching design is centered on learners, which makes full use of modern information technology and resources by employing systematic methods, and scientifically arranges all teaching procedures so as to optimize the teaching process. The focus of information language instructional design is to develop learners' language application skills. On the other hand, as an effective and interactive teaching mode, task-based teaching is also student-centered, which can create various realistic language communication situations with purposes, so that students can use what they have learned to complete the language learning tasks, and eventually improve their practical English application skills by means of "learning by doing". Thus, to carry out college English teaching design by creating learning tasks in the realistic language situations, and make full

use of information technology to provide students with opportunities for language input and output in order to meet their learning needs, thereby improving students' English language ability.

Accordingly, a task-based college oral English lesson was designed with the topic of "Food Ordering and Dining Etiquette", a necessary future work activity of the students majoring in International Trade. Combined with various information teaching methods, an efficient oral English lesson was conducted with the support of online course platform, multiple teaching software, and multiple evaluations of teachers and students in this study.

The design and implementation of college English informatization teaching

Teaching analysis

In the talent training objectives of International Trade majors, "good foreign language application ability and intercultural communication ability" are core competences. Meanwhile, the content of this lesson "Food Ordering and Dining Etiquette" is related to the students' future activities in their workplaces. It is helpful to improve the students' ability to use English language and cross-cultural communication in this occasion. According to the students' English level and learning characteristics, the teacher integrated the content of the teaching materials with the online course and the relevant resources of the English learning apps, and employed the informatization teaching methods to enable the students to acquire knowledge and improve language communication skills.

Analysis of teaching content and the students' learning performance

The oral English lesson was designed for the freshmen majoring in International Trade in a vocational college. The topic of the lesson is "Food Ordering and Dining Etiquette", which is the second scene of the module "Dining". The students have learned the first scene of the module, and mastered some useful words and expressions in restaurant reservation. In addition, the data from the college English online course platform shows that, most of the students have good English pronunciation, but they are lack of western food vocabulary and useful sentences of ordering food, so their English expression and communication on this topic is insufficient.

Through the pre-class questionnaire survey, the teacher discovered that the students were unfamiliar with the business dining and western food, so that they could not express themselves in a proper way. Moreover, they have weak cross-cultural communication awareness in conversations. Nevertheless, most students are lively and cheerful, and they are interested in learning activities such as language games, role-play and after-class video making. They are fond of practicing oral English with English learning apps, but they are lack of sustainable motivation and need the teacher's encouragement and supervision.

Teaching objectives and teaching difficulties

The teaching objectives of this lesson are to enable the students to master the relevant English expressions in western restaurants, and develop the students' comprehensive English ability and cross-cultural communication ability in business dining occasions. Specifically, it can be divided into the following three sub-goals. Firstly, to know the commonly used expressions of western food and the order of serving western food. Secondly, to grasp the meaning and usage of the key words "order, appetizer, main course, dessert, specialty, recommend". Thirdly, to master the usage of the frequently used sentences: 1) What do you recommend? 2) What starters do you have? 3) I'd like to try the crisp fish. 4) Can I get the T-bone? 5) Shrimp cocktail sounds great.

The teaching difficulties of this lesson are as follows:1) to know the order of serving western

food and the basic table manners. 2) to use a variety of sentences ordering food and to grasp the correct expressions of western food.

Teaching strategies

An online and offline mixed teaching mode was adopted in this lesson, and information technology was applied to all aspects of teaching process. The specific teaching methods used in this lesson are as follows:

Firstly, task-based teaching method was applied in the teaching process. The students were required to fulfill two main tasks of “Ordering Food” and “Dining Etiquette” by completing six activities. Their language knowledge and skills are improved by means of “learning by doing”.

Secondly, some English learning apps were used to create various realistic language communication situations for the students. For instance, the “English Fun Dubbing” assignment of the “Table Etiquette”, the “Ordering Food” conversations with an AI waiter of “English liulishuo”, and the video recording task of the “Ordering Food in Western Restaurant”. The realistic language communication situations allow the students to master and apply language knowledge in language practice.

Teaching procedures

The teaching procedures are divided into three steps: pre-class preparation, in-class activities, and after-class assignment.

Pre-class preparation

Before class, the teacher gave the students pre-class tasks including watching the micro-course video of the college English online course, completing the dubbing assignment for the video “Table Etiquette” on “English Fun Dubbing” app, and uploading their best dubbing video on the online course platform. By watching the micro-course video, the students learned the expressions of western food and the sentence patterns of ordering food. Besides, they had an intuitive understanding of western dining etiquette through the English dubbing practice. The teacher reviewed the students' online course assignments, including video watching, note taking and the dubbing videos uploaded by the students, and selected the best videos to prepare for the class presentation.

In-class activities

Lead in activity

The teacher played a “A Business Dinner” video clip and introduced the topic of this lesson as well as the learning tasks. The students had group discussions and answered the teacher's questions about the video.

Task 1 Ordering food

Activity 1 Let's play the language game “Ordering western food”

The students used the “English liulishuo” app on their cell phones to play the language game “Ordering western food” with personalized guidance of the teacher. Then the teacher invited the students with the highest score in each group to PK. Through this activity, the students could learn the order of serving western food and grasp the expressions of western food as well as the frequently used sentences of ordering food.

Activity 2 Ordering western food with an AI waiter

The students had a conversation with an AI waiter on the “English liulishuo” app to order western food. The teacher invited the students with the highest score in each group to perform on the stage, and then corrected the students' language errors. Through the conversation with

AI waiter, the students could flexibly use the expressions and sentences they had learned in the previous session to order food in western restaurant.

Activity 3 A quiz

The students completed a quiz of the “Thumb Class” app on some frequently used sentence patterns of ordering food. The teacher analyzed the language errors that the students had in the quiz and figured out whether the students had mastered these sentences or not.

Task 2 Dining etiquette

Activity 1 Showing the best dubbing videos

Two students were invited by the teacher to go on the stage showing their excellent dubbing videos of “Table Etiquette”, and then the teacher instructed the whole class to complete the blank-filling exercise of western etiquette knowledge. Through the presentation of the dubbing videos and blank-filling exercise, the students found out the mistakes in their pronunciation, and had a profound understanding of western etiquette knowledge.

Activity 2 Good table manners

The teacher showed some pictures of table manners and summarized six “Dos” and three “Don’ts”. Then the teacher asked the students to imitate the gestures on the pictures so as to give them a deep impression about good table manners.

Activity 3 A quiz

The students completed a quiz on “How much do you know about western table manners?”. Then the teacher gave comments on the quiz and figured out the students' knowledge of western table manners.

Review & Summary

The teacher reviewed and summarized the main points of this lesson through the “quick question & quick answer” with the students.

After-class assignment

The teacher played an animated video of “Ordering Food in Western Restaurant”, and gave after-class assignment for the students. The students were required to make up a similar dialogue to the animated video, and role played it with their group members, and finally made a video. They must write scripts and make videos through teamwork and show their best table manners in their videos. This task could consolidate the vocabulary and sentence patterns they had learned, and improve their English communication skill. Meanwhile, the teamwork could develop their collaborative ability.

Teaching evaluation

Student evaluation

The Checklist for Students was mainly used for the students to self-evaluate their learning effects of this lesson. Through self-assessment, the students could check their task completion and achievements, and reflect on their limitations, as well as adjust their learning strategies. Furthermore, they could find their weaknesses in learning, and communicate with the teacher individually and get effective suggestions.

Group evaluation

Each group member filled out the Checklist for Groups through the college English online course platform. They were required to select a group member who has the best performance in this class, and pointed out the learning weaknesses of the other group members in an objective way, in the mean time, they must propose practical suggestions for them. The group members could learn from each other from those evaluations and feedbacks.

Teacher evaluation

According to the “Speaking Competency” section of the “English Speaking Test for English

Proficiency in Higher Education” and the “English Proficiency Rating Scale” as well as the linguistic features of the English sitcoms, the teacher set four evaluation dimensions and specific scoring criteria for the video assignments completed by the students after class. The teacher scored and gave comments on the videos to confirm the students’ learning outcomes, and pointed out their limitations and the direction of future efforts. In addition, the teacher selected excellent videos to show in the class, so as to encourage the students to learn from each other and make progress together.

CONCLUSION

The task-based informatization teaching design and implementation highlighted the students' oral English application ability and cross-cultural communication ability. By adopting the online and offline mixed teaching mode, the teaching design integrated information technology and teaching content, greatly extended time and space of the class, which effectively solved the teaching difficulties of the lesson. During the teaching process, the teacher and the students interacted with each other very well through the task-based activities, and the teaching effect was significantly improved.

Firstly, the pre-class tasks through the online course and the English learning apps could ensure the students' personalized learning needs and self-scheduled time to carry out sufficient oral English practice. Moreover, the teacher could provide timely and effective feedbacks on the learning outcomes of the students through online homework, quizzes and posts in the discussion forum. Secondly, the in-class tasks including playing the language game and having a conversation with an AI waiter, and after-class video making allowed the students getting more opportunities for oral English presentation, which stimulated the students to improve their language skills.

Nevertheless, from the results of the quizzes, video assignments and evaluation forms, the teacher discovered that some students had language knowledge loopholes. For instance, some difficult words in this lesson were incorrectly pronounced by quite a number of students. And a couple of students could not distinguish the starter and main course when they were ordering food.

In response to the problems discovered in this lesson, the teacher conducted teaching reflection and figured out the solutions to the problems in the follow-up teaching.

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