

Research on the Blended Teaching Mode of Advanced English

A Case Study of Sichuan Minzu College

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ABSTRACT

As a compulsory course for Senior English majors, Advanced English is an important and difficult course. This paper takes Sichuan Minzu College as an example to explore the teaching mode of Advanced English. Two aspects will be discussed, the first aspect is to introduce the current situation of Advanced English teaching in Sichuan Minzu College. The second aspect is the implementation of the blended teaching mode of Advanced English. The purpose of doing so is to improve the teaching quality and language ability of English majors and also cultivate cultural literacy of students.

Keywords: *Advanced English, Blended teaching mode, Sichuan Minzu College.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Advanced English is a core course for Senior of English majors, the textbooks of course cover a wide range of subjects, including literature, philosophy, education, politics, economy, arts etc [1]. It aims to improve students' English language skills, cultivate speculative ability, expand international vision and cultivate cross-cultural communication ability. Through the study of this course, students will be able to clarify the text information and theme, grasp the tone of the article and the author's attitude, understand the issues of society, master practical discourse analysis and writing skills [2]. However, in today's information era, Advanced English teaching promotes the new requirements for teachers. If teachers continue to adhere to the old teaching methods and ideas, it will greatly affect the teaching quality. Therefore, in the new educational environment, teachers should constantly explore teaching models, update teaching methods, and introduce modern teaching methods in order to promote the quality of Advanced English teaching [3].

2. CURRENT SITUATION OF ADVANCED ENGLISH TEACHING IN SICHUAN MINZU COLLEGE

2.1 Traditional Teaching Mode

Advanced English course is a compulsory course for juniors and seniors of English majors. The traditional teaching mode is teacher centered, mainly focusing on word for word explanation, students learn by listening to the teacher's explanation in the classroom. Few class activities and class participation are happened, and personal subjective initiative of students is ignored.

2.2 Textbooks and Teaching Contents

Sichuan Minzu College adopts the Advanced English textbook edited by zhang Hanxi as teaching contents. With the developments of the times, this textbook has been published to the third edition (reset). The editors increase or decrease the contents of the article in time so as to correspond to the needs of the times. There are two volumes for Advanced English, Book1 and Book2, with 15 articles in each book, which include famous works in literature, philosophy, education, politics,

economy and so on. Sichuan Minzu College is a newly-built undergraduate college for nationalities, so according to the requirements on curriculum and cultivation scheme of the profession, it offers two semesters of Advanced English teaching tasks, namely, one school year of junior students. After discussion and consultation with teachers in professional teaching and research section, it was finally decided to select 6 articles from Book1 and 4 articles from Book2, with a total of 10 articles to do the intensive reading in classes. What's more, it was also decided to choose another 4 articles for students to do self-study from two textbooks, 2 articles in each semester, which will be included in the final examination.

2.3 The Situation of Students

As a newly built undergraduate college for nationalities, most students of Sichuan Minzu College have a poor foundation in English, and have certain difficulties in understanding the meaning and content of the textbooks, which affects the teaching progress and learning effect.

3. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BLENDED TEACHING MODE OF ADVANCED ENGLISH IN SICHUAN MINZU COLLEGE

3.1 Connotation and Characteristics of the Blended Teaching Mode

The Blended teaching mode is a teaching and learning mode that combines traditional face-to-face courses with online learning [4]. It is the product of the rapid development of information technology and a new teaching mode that breaks the traditional face-to-face teaching mode. The Blended teaching mode adheres to the teaching idea of "student-centered and teacher-led", the common used blended teaching modes are MOOC, SPOC and Micro Class [5].

3.2 Exploration of the Blended Teaching Mode

Due to the natural particularity of Advanced English courses, few relevant experts have built online courses for this course. Considering the current reality of this course, especially under the circumstance of Covid-19, associate professor Yuan Li, the dean of professional teaching and research section in our college, led our team to build online courses which are suitable for English

Majors in our college in Xuexitong APP. Our team has carefully chosen 10 articles from the Advanced English books to construct the online classes. For the constructed online classes, each article includes five parts, the first part is preview and thinking, the second part is culture and background knowledge, the third part is text explanation, the fourth part is related information expansion, and the fifth part is practice and testing. Each article is arranged for 12 class hours. The five parts of each article are linked and progressive, covering all contents from introduction to after-school practices, which can be described as comprehensive and in-depth program.

This article will take the unit 1 Face to Face with Hurricane Camille as an example to briefly introduce the blended teaching mode process. First of all, the teachers distribute the preview content in advance through "Xuexitong" learning APP, and ask the students to complete previewing and reading the contents of the first and second parts of this unit online. Then for the first two classes of this unit, teachers mainly focus on discussion of the first two parts that is preview and thinking, and culture and background knowledge. During the discussion, the teachers organize students to discussion, and require students actively participate in the discussion of the problems given ahead in the form of groups, so as to fully stimulate students' enthusiasm and participation. And for the following classes, teachers and students come to do intensive reading for the articles. Each article is equally distributed to 8 groups with equal paragraphs. Textually analysis is mainly explained by teachers, and supplemented by student group's discussion. In the process of discussion, group members actively contribute their thoughts and wisdom, making the discussion process intense and in-depth. After learning the content of the article, teachers distribute the after-school exercises through cell phone. The exercises must be completed within the set time, otherwise it will be regarded as incomplete and the final score will be reduced by incomplete exercise. All students' class contribution, class participation in discussions, and final exercises will be recorded and included in the final exam.

3.3 Exploration of Teaching Methods

Advanced English contains a wide range of topics involving literature, art, politics, economy, ecology, history, geography and others [6]. The articles of Advanced English are rich in content, complex in vocabulary, flexible in language expression. The "Task-based" teaching method is

adopted to require students to learn and master the language points in the article, such as background information, structure analysis, etc. for example, in the article of *The Sad Young Men*, students are required to discuss the textual structure in groups, present and explain the background of the article in groups one by one. At the same time, the "communicative" teaching method is adopted to strengthen students' oral expression ability. For example, in the article of *Pub Talk and King's English*, students are organized to imitate the bar chat scene in class order to arouse students' interest and stimulate students' learning enthusiasm.

3.4 Diversification of Teaching Tools

On the basis of traditional classroom teaching, the introduction of multimedia teaching tools makes teaching forms diversified and flexible. On the one hand, the use of audio-visual materials in the classroom enriches the form of classroom teaching. On the other hand, mobile phones have become an important auxiliary tool for learning. Students install the learning app "Xuexitong", through which students are able to preview, do self-study, and review learning contents. And they can also do after class exercises by using mobile phones. Advanced English courses can be learned anytime, anywhere, making learning very flexible.

4. CONCLUSION

As a compulsory course for Senior English majors, blended teaching mode of Advanced English conforms the development of the times. It not only strengthens the students' dominant position in teaching, but also makes the whole process of teaching and learning more complete and manageable. The combination of online and offline learning methods is conducive to improving students' critical thinking ability and autonomous learning ability, exploring advanced English teaching models suitable for national conditions and school conditions especially in the era of Covid-19 pandemic, and creating "golden courses" for English majors. In the context of intellectualization, the teaching mode of language courses should not only be the simple application of information technology and the simple transformation of teaching forms, but also comprehensively change the teaching concept, teaching mode and teaching organization to make learning more personalized.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Linjia Gao was responsible for the manuscript writing and revising. Li Yuan contributed to constructing online classes.

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