

Research on the College English Teaching Mode Based on the Integration of Language Learning and Critical Thinking Ability Training

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Abstract: Under the tide of economic globalization, college English teaching should not only focus on the improvement of language ability, but also on the cultivation of students' critical thinking ability. This paper takes the integration of language learning and critical thinking ability as the breakthrough point, explores the college English teaching mode under the background of the integration of the two, analyzes the current situation and disadvantages of the separation of the two in the current teaching, and puts forward the integration path from the aspects of curriculum design, teacher training, evaluation system, and so on. With the help of activities such as creating real language situations, carrying out debates and critical reading, it helps students strengthen the improvement of logical analysis and critical thinking ability in their gradual learning, realize the coordinated development of language learning and critical thinking ability, and cultivate compound talents with both language literacy and critical thinking ability for the society.

Keywords: Language learning; Critical thinking ability; Integration; College English; Teaching model

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1. Introduction

Under the background of the intelligent era, globalization has become an inevitable trend. At present, driven by both, language learning is no longer limited to the simple tool category, and has gradually become an important carrier for cultivating cross-cultural critical thinking ability. The traditional college English teaching mode is single and focuses on the mechanical input of language knowledge and skill training. There is a lack of motivation in the cultivation of core qualities such as logical reasoning and critical thinking, which cannot meet the training needs of compound talents in the new era. With the deepening reform of higher education and the increasing demand for comprehensive quality talents, how to deeply integrate language learning and critical thinking ability training and build a more innovative and effective teaching mode has become an important issue to be solved. Based on the internal relationship between language education and thinking development, this paper analyzes the significance and current situation of college English teaching, and explores the path and

method of organically integrating the cultivation of critical thinking ability into the whole process of language teaching, aiming to provide theoretical and practical reference for improving the quality of college English teaching and cultivating high-quality talents with international vision and critical thinking ability.

2. Significance of exploring the college English teaching mode under the integration of the two

2.1. Improving students' comprehensive language literacy

Traditional college English teaching focuses more on the teaching of language knowledge, paying more attention to students' mastery of vocabulary, grammar, and other basic content, but it is inevitable that there will be "high scores but low abilities" in practical application. The teaching mode of integrating language learning and critical thinking ability training can effectively improve this situation ^[1]. In this mode, students are no longer limited to mechanically memorizing language rules, but through in-depth thinking, analysis, and discussion of various topics, take language as a carrier to strengthen thinking, and improve the accuracy, fluency, and flexibility of language use in the process of expressing views and demonstrating ideas. For example, in class debate, students need to use English to organize rigorous logical argumentation and accurately express complex views, which not only exercises their language expression ability, but also enables students to deepen their understanding of language structure and semantic connotation in language practice, truly realize the coordinated development of language knowledge and language skills, and significantly improve their comprehensive language literacy ^[1].

2.2. Improving students' critical thinking

Critical thinking ability is the comprehensive embodiment of students' critical thinking, creative thinking, and other high-level thinking abilities, which has a profound impact on students' lifelong learning and personal development. In the traditional English classroom, students are often in a situation of passive acceptance of knowledge, lack of opportunities for independent thinking and active exploration, and the development of thinking ability is limited. The teaching mode of integrating language learning and critical thinking ability provides students with rich thinking training scenes ^[2]. By designing open-ended questions, guiding case analysis, organizing group discussions, and other teaching activities, teachers encourage students to break through their inherent thinking patterns, examine problems in an all-round way, and put forward innovative opinions from different levels. When analyzing literary works, students' understanding of the literal meaning of the text is the basis. More importantly, they should deeply explore the cultural connotation and social significance behind the works, and critically evaluate the author's views and creative techniques. This critical process effectively improves students' logical reasoning, analytical judgment, and innovative thinking ability, so that students can continuously develop their thinking in language learning, improve their cognitive social ability, and lay a solid thinking foundation for their future academic research and career development ^[2].

2.3. Meeting the needs of social talents

With the rapid development of the times and the continuous progress of society, the requirements for talents are increasingly diversified and comprehensive. In the context of globalization, frequent international exchanges and cooperation have become the norm. The society needs not only talents with good English language skills, but also compound talents who can use English for efficient communication, independent thinking, and innovative problem solving. The college English teaching mode that integrates language learning and critical

thinking ability training conforms to the trend of social demand for talents. The students trained under this teaching mode can accurately express their views in English in international business negotiations, cross-cultural academic exchanges, and other scenes. At the same time, with strong speculative ability, they can deeply analyze the nature of the problem, put forward practical solutions, and show stronger competitiveness and adaptability in the workplace. This kind of teaching mode will help colleges and universities provide more high-quality talents that meet the needs of the times for society, and promote the long-term development of the country in the international competition ^[3].

2.4. Promoting college English teaching reform

For a long time, there have been some problems in college English teaching, such as single teaching objectives, outdated teaching methods, and so on. The teaching mode of integrating language learning and critical thinking ability training provides new ideas and directions for college English teaching reform. This mode requires teachers to innovate teaching ideas, change from knowledge imparters to learning guides, pay more attention to students' dominant position and ability training, promote teachers to innovate teaching methods, adopt diversified teaching methods such as task-driven and project-based learning, and create a positive and active classroom atmosphere. At the same time, it also promotes the improvement of the curriculum evaluation system, from the single language knowledge assessment to the comprehensive evaluation of students' language ability and critical thinking ability ^[3]. The exploration and practice of this teaching mode will effectively promote the transformation of college English teaching from the traditional mode to a modern and diversified mode, improve the quality and level of college English teaching, and promote the connotative development of higher education ^[4].

2.5. Promoting cultural inheritance and exchange

There is no doubt about the importance of language learning. It is the carrier of culture. College English teaching not only shoulders the important task of language teaching, but also undertakes the mission of cultural communication. Under the teaching mode of integrating language learning and critical thinking ability, students should learn to treat different cultural connotations dialectically in the process of learning English language and Western culture, and be able to use critical thinking to compare and analyze Chinese and Western culture, so as to have a more objective and comprehensive understanding of western culture and avoid blind worship or one-sided cognition. At the same time, when using English to express their views and participate in international exchanges, students will also take the initiative to think about and spread their own culture, enhance cultural confidence in cross-cultural exchanges, and realize equal dialogue, exchange, and mutual learning between different cultures. It will help promote Chinese culture to the world, promote the diversity of world culture, and show the unique charm of Chinese culture on the international stage ^[5].

3. Status analysis

Today, with the accelerating process of globalization, the demand for high-quality talents with international vision, intercultural communication ability, and critical thinking is growing. As an important part of higher education, college English teaching aims not only to impart language knowledge and improve students' language skills, but also to cultivate students' critical thinking ability so that they can think independently and communicate effectively in multicultural communication ^[4]. College English teaching mode, which integrates language learning and critical thinking ability training, has gradually become a research hotspot and

reform direction in the field of education. However, in the actual teaching process, the implementation of this integration mode faces many opportunities and challenges that need to be solved.

The choice of teaching methods has a direct impact on the integration effect of language learning and critical thinking ability training. At present, although the college English classroom teaching methods show a diversified trend, there are still deficiencies in cultivating students' critical thinking ability. On the one hand, teachers rely more on textbooks in teaching, so the teaching content inevitably has limitations and lacks the expansion and innovation of teaching resources. It makes the teaching content lack modernity and interest, and it is difficult to stimulate students' interest in learning and speculative enthusiasm. For example, in reading teaching, teachers tend to focus on the understanding of the details of the article and the analysis of language points, but ignore guiding students to analyze and evaluate the theme, views, and logical structure of the article. On the other hand, group discussion, project-based learning, and other teaching methods that can cultivate students' critical thinking ability are formalized in practical application. In the group discussion, some students lack the enthusiasm to participate, and the content of the discussion is often superficial, failing to really explore the problem in depth, and failing to achieve the expected effect of cultivating critical thinking ability^[6].

As an important carrier of teaching, the content and arrangement of college English textbooks play a key role in the implementation of the integration mode of language learning and critical thinking ability training. At present, some college English textbooks fail to fully reflect the times and diversity in content selection, and lack in-depth discussion on topics with in-depth significance such as social development and cultural exchange, which is difficult to arouse students' thinking and in-depth exploration. In the arrangement of textbooks, the systematic and hierarchical attention to the cultivation of critical thinking ability is insufficient, and the students' critical thinking consciousness is not gradually guided according to their cognitive level and language ability. For example, the speculative exercises in some textbooks are scattered and lack clear goals and guidance, so students often feel unable to start and effectively exercise their speculative ability when completing the exercises.

4. Analysis on the construction path of college English teaching mode integrating language learning and critical thinking ability training

4.1. Reconstructing the curriculum system and strengthening the speculative-oriented module

At the level of curriculum design, we should have the courage to break through the single framework of traditional "reading, writing, and translation" skills training and build a curriculum module with the development of critical thinking ability as the core. First of all, a special critical English course is set up to systematically cultivate students' high-level thinking abilities such as analysis, reasoning, and evaluation through special training such as academic debate and critical reading. For example, we will conduct in-depth discussions on controversial topics such as "the impact of artificial intelligence on social ethics" and "cultural identity in the context of globalization," and guide students to use English for multi-dimensional argumentation. Secondly, the critical task is embedded in the general English course, which combines listening training with information analysis, oral practice with opinion expression, and writing training with logical construction. For example, in listening teaching, a three-step task chain of "point of view capture–logical analysis–critical response" is designed, which requires students to identify logical loopholes in information and put forward refutation opinions on the basis of understanding the content^[5]. In addition, we should develop interdisciplinary theme courses, integrate the contents of literature, sociology, science, and technology, and encourage students

to use English to carry out interdisciplinary thinking. For example, in the course of “future society in science fiction,” we should guide students to analyze the technical ethics problems in the text and make cross-cultural comparisons.

4.2. Innovating teaching methods and creating an interactive speculative classroom

Classroom teaching should change from “knowledge transfer” to “thinking collision,” and adopt diversified teaching methods to stimulate speculative vitality. The Socratic Questioning method can effectively guide students’ in-depth thinking. Teachers can promote students’ rational reflection by continuously asking questions such as “what is your basis?” and “does this conclusion have limitations?” For example, when discussing “the impact of social media on interpersonal communication,” teachers can guide students to analyze from multiple perspectives such as psychology and communication through questioning. Project-based learning (PBL) is a deep integration of language application and speculative tasks. For example, the project of “designing an international cooperation scheme to solve the problem of garbage classification on campus” is arranged. Students are required to use English to carry out research, analyze data, propose schemes, and carry out feasibility demonstration. Debate and group discussion are important forms of cultivating critical thinking ability. Teachers can design debate questions such as “can online education replace traditional classroom,” and exercise students’ logical construction and ad hoc refutation ability through the confrontation of positive and negative views. At the same time, group case analysis is used to promote students’ critical thinking in the collision of views.

4.3. Optimizing the evaluation system and establishing a multidimensional speculative evaluation mechanism

The traditional evaluation method based on language accuracy is difficult to measure the development of critical thinking ability, so it is necessary to build a multi-dimensional system, including process and summative evaluation. In terms of process evaluation, a learning portfolio is established to collect students’ classroom speech records, debate drafts, reflection logs, and other materials, and the dynamic evaluation is carried out from the perspectives of innovation, logical rigor, and adequacy of argument. For example, by analyzing the frequency of students’ statements in group discussions and the trajectory of their views, we can judge their speculative participation. The summative evaluation can adopt the structured scoring standard to weight the language ability and critical thinking ability respectively. For example, in the argumentative writing score, the language expression accounts for 40%, and the logical structure, opinion depth, and critical thinking account for 60%. In addition, the peer evaluation and self-evaluation mechanism is introduced, and students are required to score the performance of group discussion and peer speeches according to the critical thinking ability evaluation scale, and write a reflection report to improve their critical thinking consciousness in evaluating others and self-reflection.

4.4. Improving teachers’ quality and strengthening speculative teaching ability

As the key to the reform of teaching mode, teachers need to improve their critical teaching ability through systematic training. Colleges and universities can organize teachers to participate in critical thinking ability training workshops, learn Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives, critical thinking theory, and other knowledge, and master Socratic Questioning, debate teaching, and other methods. Teachers are encouraged to carry out action research, explore the teaching strategy of the integration of language and speculation with the

classroom as the experimental field, such as designing the integrated teaching unit of “reading–discussion–writing,” and optimizing the teaching effect through teaching reflection and data analysis. Establish a teacher collaboration community to share speculative teaching resources and experience through collective lesson preparation, teaching observation, case study, and other activities. For example, an interdisciplinary teacher team was established to jointly develop a teaching case library that integrates language and speculation, covering multiple topics such as technology, culture, and society, and providing rich materials for teaching practice.

4.5. Improving the supporting environment and adding a digital speculative learning platform

Relying on modern information technology, create an online and offline speculative learning ecosystem. Develop a special speculative English learning platform, integrate a debate video database, an academic paper corpus, online debate tools, and other resources, and support students’ autonomous learning and collaborative exploration ^[6]. For example, the platform is equipped with a “viewpoint arena” module, where students can upload debate videos. The system analyzes indicators such as language fluency and logical structure through artificial intelligence technology, and provides suggestions for improvement. Use virtual simulation technology to create cross-cultural speculative scenes, such as simulated United Nations conferences, international business negotiations, and other situations, so that students can improve their language use and critical ability in immersive interaction. At the same time, establish a cloud discussion area for real-time interaction between teachers and students, encourage students to carry out real-time speculative communication around hot topics, and teachers provide guidance and feedback in time to form a continuous speculative learning atmosphere.

5. Conclusion

The college English teaching mode integrating language learning and critical thinking ability training is the due meaning of the development of the times and the inevitable trend of college education and teaching reform. It not only meets the needs of talent training in the new era, but also builds a bridge for students’ cross-cultural communication and in-depth thinking. It can effectively improve students’ language use ability and logical thinking level, break the limitations of traditional language learning, and realize the leap from acquiring language knowledge to shaping thinking ability. In the future, college English teaching should continue to explore and deepen this mode, further optimize the curriculum design and teacher-student interaction, and help students grow into compound talents with international vision and critical thinking ability while improving their language literacy, so as to better adapt to the challenges and opportunities in the era of globalization.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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