

Cultivation of Students' Critical Thinking Ability in College English Audio-Visual and Oral Teaching

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Abstract: With the increasingly prominent trend of globalization, English, as the common language of international communication, plays an increasingly important role in university education. As a key link in English teaching, the college English audio-visual oral course not only imparts language knowledge and skills, but also shoulders the important task of cultivating students' critical thinking. As one of the essential core qualities of modern talents, critical thinking ability plays an irreplaceable role in students' in-depth understanding of English knowledge, improving intercultural communication ability and cultivating innovative thinking. This paper expounds the significance of cultivating students' critical thinking ability in college English audio-visual and oral teaching, and puts forward a series of innovative teaching strategies to cultivate students' critical thinking ability combined with practical teaching experience and cutting-edge education theory, in order to provide new ideas and practical guidance for the improvement of college English teaching quality and the development of students' comprehensive quality.

Keywords: Critical thinking ability; College English; Audio-visual and oral teaching

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1. Introduction

In the current wave of globalization, international exchanges are increasingly frequent, which puts forward more stringent requirements for college students' comprehensive English ability. College English teaching not only requires students to master a solid language foundation, but also needs to focus on cultivating their critical thinking ability, so that in the context of cross-cultural communication, students can accurately express their views, rationally analyze various problems, and find effective solutions. As a key link in college English teaching, the audio-visual oral course has built a unique platform for cultivating students' critical thinking ability with the help of rich and diverse audio-visual resources and interactive teaching activities. So, how to fully tap the potential of this platform and effectively improve students' critical thinking ability has become an important issue for college English educators to think deeply and actively explore.

2. The significance of cultivating students' critical thinking ability in college English audio-visual and oral teaching

2.1. Meeting the needs of social development

In the current highly competitive social environment, employers' requirements for graduates' ability are increasing, and critical thinking ability has become one of the indispensable core competencies in the workplace. In the work scenario, whether analyzing market data, solving work problems, or participating in team discussions and decisions, you need to have the ability to think critically and analyze problems. For example, in the business field, employees need to analyze and judge market trends, competitors, and other information, and put forward reasonable business strategies; in the field of scientific research, researchers should critically consider the experimental data and previous research results, so as to promote scientific research innovation and development. After entering the workplace, students with critical thinking ability can quickly adapt to the working environment, use their knowledge and thinking methods to solve practical problems, and show stronger professional competitiveness ^[1].

2.2. Improving comprehensive language use ability

Cultivating critical thinking ability is conducive to students' more thorough understanding of language. In college English audio-visual oral classes, students are not exposed to isolated vocabulary and grammar, but to the language used in real scenes. Through the analysis, thinking, and discussion of audio-visual materials, students can understand the meaning and function of words and sentences in different situations from the purpose and intention of language use, rather than just the literal interpretation. Students with critical thinking ability will pay more attention to the organization of language in oral expression, and choose appropriate language strategies and expression methods according to different topics and communication objects. They will use critical thinking to sort out the views they want to express, avoid ambiguity and clutter, and make the language output more convincing. For example, in English speech or discussion, students can clearly state their own views and support them through reasonable arguments and the argumentation process, which is the specific presentation of the role of critical thinking ability in language expression ^[2].

2.3. Improving autonomous learning ability

Critical thinking ability is closely related to autonomous learning ability. In the teaching of the college English audio-visual oral course, cultivating students' critical thinking ability can stimulate their autonomous learning consciousness and enthusiasm. Students with critical thinking ability can use critical thinking to screen and evaluate the massive English learning resources, and select materials that match their learning goals and levels.

At the same time, critical thinking ability urges students to constantly reflect on their own learning methods and results in the learning process. They will actively think about their problems in listening comprehension and oral expression, and try to find solutions by analyzing the reasons. This ability of self-reflection and adjustment is the key element of autonomous learning. For example, if students find it difficult to understand some accents in listening, they will think about whether it is due to a lack of understanding of the local culture or a lack of targeted listening training, and then independently find relevant materials for intensive practice. Through this process of autonomous learning, students gradually get rid of excessive dependence on teachers and textbooks, form independent learning ability, and lay a solid foundation for lifelong learning ^[3].

2.4. Improving cultural comprehension and intercultural communication

College English audio-visual and oral materials are rich in diverse cultural content, involving customs, values,

social systems, etc., in different countries and regions. Cultivating students' critical thinking ability can guide them to examine this cultural information from a critical perspective and prevent blind acceptance or conflict. Students are no longer merely passive recipients of culture, but can actively analyze the deep causes behind different cultural phenomena and understand the root causes of cultural differences.

In cross-cultural communication, critical thinking ability is particularly important. When facing communication objects from different cultural backgrounds, students need to use critical thinking to understand the other party's thinking mode and behavioral habits, so as to prevent communication frustration caused by cultural misunderstanding. For example, when communicating with native English speakers, it is learned that they express their views more directly, while some people in the eastern cultural background are relatively euphemistic. Students with critical thinking ability can keenly perceive this difference, and flexibly adjust their own communication methods in communication, so as to achieve smoother and more efficient cross-cultural communication. This ability to understand and adapt to cultural differences can enable students to better interact and cooperate with people from different cultural backgrounds in a globalized environment ^[4].

3. Innovative strategies for cultivating students' critical thinking ability in college English audio-visual and oral teaching

3.1. Clarifying the teaching objectives and focusing on cultivating students' critical thinking ability

In the teaching of the college English audio-visual oral course, a clear and reasonable teaching goal is the cornerstone of cultivating students' critical thinking ability. Traditional audio-visual and oral teaching objectives focus on the teaching of language knowledge and the training of basic listening and speaking skills. However, in order to meet the needs of the development of the times for talents' critical thinking ability, teachers need to re-examine and adjust the teaching objectives, and emphasize the cultivation of critical thinking ability. Teachers should deeply study the syllabus and curriculum standards, combine the actual level and professional needs of students, and refine the training objectives of critical thinking ability. For example, for junior students, it can be set to cultivate their preliminary questioning and analysis ability by analyzing the views in simple audio-visual materials; for senior students, they are required to critically evaluate complex academic audio-visual content and put forward unique opinions. Only when the teaching objectives are clear and definite can teachers carry out teaching activities with a targeted aim, guide students to improve their English audio-visual and oral levels, at the same time, deeply exercise their critical thinking ability, and lay a solid foundation for their long-term development ^[5].

3.2. Optimizing the content of teaching materials and integrating speculative elements

Textbook compilers and teachers should optimize the content of textbooks and add materials that can stimulate students' speculation. On the one hand, choose audio-visual materials with depth and breadth, covering topics in different fields and cultures, such as scientific and technological development, social hot spots, cultural differences, etc. These topics can arouse students' interest and thinking, and provide rich materials for the cultivation of critical thinking ability. For example, audio-visual materials about the impact of artificial intelligence on the future society are added to the textbook to let students think about the opportunities and challenges brought by artificial intelligence. Teachers can also choose audio-visual materials that are both challenging and attractive according to students' actual level and acceptance ability. For example, when learning English listening, you can choose some movies or TV plays with vivid and interesting content and

moderate speaking speed, so that students can not only enjoy entertainment, but also improve their listening comprehension ability.

On the other hand, in the design of teaching exercises, in addition to the conventional listening comprehension and oral expression, the questions of analysis, evaluation, and discussion are added. Students are asked to express their opinions and explain the reasons, or put forward feasible solutions according to the materials. In practice, teachers can also appropriately expand and supplement the content of teaching materials according to the actual situation, and introduce more audio-visual materials close to real life, so as to enhance the speculative nature of teaching ^[6].

3.3. Using multiple teaching methods to stimulate speculative vitality

In college English audio-visual teaching, it is very important to introduce diversified teaching methods, which are helpful in cultivating students' critical thinking ability. Teachers can use the question guidance method to design enlightening hierarchical questions. For example, after playing the English video about global warming, first help students master the basic content with factual questions such as "What global warming phenomenon is mentioned in the video?"; Then use the analytical question "what are the factors leading to these global warming phenomena?" to encourage students to explore the root causes of the problem; Finally, through such evaluative questions as "what do you think of the effectiveness of the measures taken to deal with global warming in the video? What are the reasons?" students are encouraged to elaborate their views and evaluations, stimulate their speculative interest, and cultivate their multi-dimensional thinking ability with a deep chain of questions ^[7].

The group cooperative learning method can also create many opportunities for students to communicate and speculate. The teacher will divide the students into groups to discuss specific audio-visual themes. For example, after watching English history movies, the group members will jointly analyze the theme, characters, and plot of the movies. Members share their opinions, listen to others' opinions, and deepen their understanding of the film through mutual discussion and debate. They not only improve their oral expression, but also learn to think from the perspective of others, so as to exercise their critical thinking and teamwork abilities.

In addition, role simulation is also an effective means to cultivate students' critical thinking ability. In Business English teaching, after playing the business negotiation video, students can simulate the negotiation scene in groups, and use their knowledge to explain their positions and communicate and negotiate according to their roles. In this process, students think about how to express and respond effectively, and exercise their critical thinking and language application ability. After the simulation, teachers can organize students to summarize and reflect to further promote the development of students' critical thinking ability. These teaching methods cooperate with each other to help cultivate students' critical thinking ability ^[8].

3.4. Taking multiple measures to improve students' critical awareness and ability

First of all, teachers should guide students to develop the habit of active thinking and questioning. In class, students are encouraged to ask questions about the content of audio-visual materials without blindly following the book. For example, after watching the report of a social phenomenon, teachers can guide students to think about whether the report's view is comprehensive and biased, and cultivate students' critical thinking consciousness.

Secondly, consolidating students' basic language skills is the premise of improving their critical thinking ability. Teachers should strengthen the teaching of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and other basic knowledge to improve students' listening comprehension and oral expression ability. Only by accurately

grasping the audio-visual content and being able to express their views smoothly can students better carry out speculation. For example, vocabulary development and grammar training help students enrich vocabulary and master the correct expression structure. At the same time, we should strengthen listening and speaking practice, enhance language input and output skills, and lay a solid foundation for the cultivation of critical thinking ability.

Extracurricular activities are equally important. Teachers can organize English debate contests, speech contests, reading clubs, etc., so that students can deepen their thinking and improve their critical thinking skills in preparation, discussion, and communication. For example, in the debate competition, students should study, demonstrate, and refute controversial topics, which is of great significance to the cultivation of critical thinking ability. It can be seen that the effective strategy to cultivate students' critical thinking ability is to stimulate students' thinking and inquiry motivation in an all-round way in and out of class ^[9].

3.5. Improving critical thinking ability with the help of multiple evaluations

In the teaching of the college English audio-visual oral course, the traditional single evaluation method fails to comprehensively evaluate students' critical thinking ability. Therefore, it is extremely necessary to build a diversified evaluation system.

On the one hand, the evaluation subject should be diversified. We should not only rely on teachers' evaluation, but also integrate students' self-evaluation and mutual evaluation. In the student self-evaluation link, teachers guide them to review their performance in audio-visual and oral activities with reference to the set standard of critical thinking ability. For example, think about the depth and breadth of your thinking when analyzing the views of audio-visual materials, and whether the logic is clear when explaining your personal opinions. Students' mutual evaluation can promote mutual learning. In the process of evaluating others, students can examine the speculative process from different angles and broaden their own thinking mode.

On the other hand, we should expand the form of evaluation. In addition to routine tests, classroom performance evaluation should be added. Pay attention to the students' performance in group discussion, role-play, and other activities to see whether they can actively participate in the discussion, put forward valuable views, and effectively refute or support others' views, so as to consider their critical thinking ability through these aspects. It can also carry out project-based evaluation, arrange projects such as making English video reports, and comprehensively evaluate the students' application of critical thinking ability in practical tasks, from data collection, viewpoint sorting to final display.

At the same time, the evaluation content should also be meticulous. We should not only focus on language expression, but also on speculative performance, such as whether the views are innovative, whether the arguments are reasonable, and whether the thinking is sensitive. With the help of multiple evaluations, comprehensively and accurately present the development status of students' critical thinking ability, give timely feedback and comments, and help students continuously improve their critical thinking ability ^[10].

4. Conclusion

Cultivating students' critical thinking ability in college English audio-visual and oral teaching is of great significance for improving students' comprehensive quality. As an important way to cultivate students' critical thinking ability, college English audio-visual and oral teaching needs to be systematically optimized and reformed from many aspects, such as clarifying teaching objectives, optimizing teaching materials, adopting

multiple teaching methods and evaluations, so as to enhance students' critical thinking, logical reasoning, and innovation consciousness, and realize students' all-round development.

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