

Research on Foreign Language Teaching in Higher Education Institutions in the Information Era

Fang Xu*, Danyun Lu

College of International Studies, National University of Defense Technology, Nanjing 215000, Jiangsu, China

*Corresponding author: Fang Xu, xufang8200@126.com

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Abstract: With the deepening of the new curriculum reform, education informatization has become an important reform direction of higher education. In this context, information technology has been widely used in higher education, and has shown great vitality in stimulating students' interest, promoting teaching reform and improving teaching quality, which also provides new opportunities for college foreign language teaching. Facing the background of educational reform in the information era, college foreign language teaching should follow the concept of "changing with the era," actively explore effective reform paths, and rely on the advantages of information technology to enable new development of foreign language teaching. This paper expounds the value and significance of the information era in college foreign language teaching, and discusses its innovative strategies, in order to provide some references for teachers.

Keywords: College foreign language; Information era; Value meaning; Innovation strategy

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1. Introduction

At present, we have entered the information era. Information technology not only provides convenience for people in all fields of life, but also provides new opportunities for foreign language teaching in colleges and universities. Traditional foreign language teaching is mostly class-centered, and the teaching mode is also based on single language teaching, which also affects the quality of curriculum teaching. In the information era, we can rely on modern technology to innovate the teaching mode, expand the curriculum resources, bring students a better learning experience, stimulate their interest in learning, and promote the growth of their comprehensive foreign language ability ^[1]. Therefore, while grasping the value of the information era in foreign language teaching, teachers should actively explore effective innovation strategies and paths, to comprehensively promote the reform of foreign language informatization in colleges and universities and help students to better learn, grow and develop.

2. The value and significance of the information era in college foreign language teaching

2.1. Stimulating students' interest

Confucius, our great educator, once said, "Those who know are not as good as those who are good, and those who are good are not as good as those who are happy." It profoundly expounds the principle of interest-based education. For contemporary college students, when they are full of interest in learning activities, they will often put more vitality and energy, and the teaching effect will be twice as good as the result with half the effort ^[2]. Therefore, in the process of college foreign language teaching, we must pay attention to the design of interesting teaching mode, so that students can fully appreciate the fun of foreign language learning, and promote their learning quality and comprehensive quality training. In the information era, we also have access to a variety of technical means, which can help us better improve the interest and effectiveness of foreign language teaching. At the same time, information technology, as a modern teaching aid that students enjoy, can enhance the intuitiveness of foreign language teaching, create diverse and interesting real situations for students, and promote their foreign language learning and contact, so that students can gain more knowledge, happiness and growth in learning through fun ^[3].

2.2. Enriching educational resources

The construction of abundant educational resources is the key to ensuring the quality of foreign language teaching. According to the actual situation of foreign language teaching in colleges and universities, the teaching process in the past was mostly centered on the tutorial, and this single mode of resource utilization has directly affected students' foreign language learning and practice ^[4]. In the information era, we can expand foreign language teaching resources using information technology, the Internet and big data. For example, we can introduce some digital resources such as multimedia and micro-lessons into teaching to make up for the shortage of traditional teaching resources and build teaching situations based on students' lives, thus simplifying their learning difficulties and deepening their knowledge understanding. This can promote the growth of their ability ^[5]. In addition, with the support of information technology, we can also provide students with various practical resources such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation through digital software and other means, which will also help them to conduct personalized and independent foreign language practice and practice inside and outside the classroom, thus promoting the cultivation and improvement of their comprehensive foreign language ability.

2.3. Innovate teaching methods

For college foreign language teaching, scientific and effective teaching methods are the key elements to improve the teaching effect. In the information era, many innovative, modern and personalized teaching technologies have been introduced to college foreign languages, which can help us innovate teaching methods and improve teaching results ^[6]. For example, we can rely on micro-lessons, information technology, big data and other methods to innovate foreign language teaching, create a transformational and digital education and teaching model, and build a smart classroom for foreign language teaching, so that students can have a good learning experience, stimulate their learning interest and potential, and comprehensively improve the teaching effect. At the same time, we can also rely on Internet technology to promote students' online learning, so as to help foreign language teaching break through the shackles of traditional classrooms and extend to the direction of digital and network, so that students can learn at any time and place, thus leading the quality of foreign language teaching to a higher level.

3. Innovative strategies for college foreign language teaching in the information era

3.1. Optimizing the teaching content through information

In the past, the mode of foreign language teaching in colleges and universities was unitary, and teaching was mostly centered on textbooks, which also led to the failure to form a good foreign language learning atmosphere. Many students had the situation of “dumb foreign language” or “Chinese foreign language” in learning. From an objective point of view, college foreign language teaching should first start from the basic link of “listening,” let students understand the rhythm and characteristics of foreign language, and cultivate their good foreign language listening sense, and then “speaking,” “reading,” “writing” and “translating,” to gradually improve students’ foreign language ability ^[7]. Therefore, in the process of foreign language teaching, to promote students’ understanding of foreign languages, deepen their learning experience and improve their learning effect, we should also introduce some “sound” teaching resources based on the use of traditional textbooks, so that students can feel the characteristics of foreign languages and cultivate their listening sense and language sense in the process of “listening”. To lay a solid foundation for their subsequent “good,” “read,” “write,” and “translate” ^[8]. To be specific, based on the background of the information era, we can introduce some digital resources with pictures and sounds by means of information to optimize the content of foreign language teaching and promote students’ foreign language learning. For example, in the teaching process, when we talk about some polite expressions, it often involves some knowledge points such as cultural customs, and if we only explain them by words, students will not be able to realize the cross-cultural differences. In this regard, we can rely on information technology to play the corresponding audio and video clips, so that students can grasp the key points of foreign language learning in these video clips that are close to life and understand the cross-cultural language features, to know how to better use foreign languages to express and communicate, and effectively improve the teaching quality.

3.2. Creating foreign language situations with the help of video display

The core of college foreign language teaching lies in cultivating students’ ability to use language in a specific context, which requires us to focus on constructing “foreign language situations” close to the reality in the teaching process, so that students can flexibly use their knowledge in a simulated environment and improve their language practice ability ^[9]. In traditional teaching, the creation of situations mostly relies on teachers’ oral descriptions. Although this method is concise and direct, it often lacks vividness and immersion, which is difficult to fully mobilize students’ learning enthusiasm and has limited teaching effect. Therefore, in the information era, we should actively rely on information means, especially video resources to build corresponding foreign language scenes, create a good learning atmosphere, and promote students’ foreign language learning and growth. For example, when it comes to foreign language knowledge about tourism, we can break through the traditional foreign language teaching mode and display some foreign language videos about tourism in the classroom, such as foreign language explanation of domestic scenery, foreign travel dialogues, etc., so that students can enter the foreign language exchange scene with the help of videos, stimulate their learning interest and promote their practical understanding ^[10]. On this basis, we can also guide students to actively carry out situational interpretation work, such as allowing them to be tourists and tour guides to conduct foreign language dialogues and simulate possible problems in the process of tourism, which can not only deepen their understanding of foreign language knowledge and skills, but also effectively promote the cultivation of their comprehensive ability, which can be said to be multiple birds with one shot.

3.3. Building an online platform to carry out cooperative learning

In college foreign language teaching, cooperative learning is an important means to promote the improvement of students' English ability. However, in view of the actual situation, the traditional cooperative learning mode of college foreign language is mostly class-centered, and due to the consideration of class hours, teachers often lack flexibility in the design, which also leads to the mode becoming a mere formality and unable to play an effective role and value. In the information era, the use of the Internet has become a trend, in this regard, we can rely on the Internet to build an online education platform, promote students' cooperative learning, and further improve their enthusiasm and autonomy. For example, in the process of foreign language teaching, we can build a foreign language cooperative learning platform from the perspective of students' Internet habits with the help of WeChat, QQ and other software they often use to lay a solid foundation for their cooperative learning^[11]. On this basis, we can divide the class into 4–6 people and internal “strength balance” of the group, to promote the comparison and competition between groups, the group members mutual communication and learning, to create a good atmosphere of cooperative learning. Then, we can assign cooperative learning tasks such as “foreign language cultural communication and exploration” and “foreign language melodrama” to guide students to carry out cooperative learning and exploration relying on the network platform after class. Finally, we can set up the corresponding “cooperative learning display” link, guide each group to show their cooperative learning results, select the “excellent group,” “best screenplay” and other awards, and give them the corresponding small gifts to promote the diversified interaction and communication of students in foreign language learning, and further stimulate their learning interest. This can give full play to the collective power to promote the improvement of students' language ability, cooperation ability, communication ability and comprehensive quality, and lay the foundation for their better growth and development.

3.4. Using human-machine dialogue to promote ability development

In the information era, foreign language teaching in colleges and universities has gradually been reformed and developed in the direction of intelligence and digitalization, and the teaching mode based on human-computer dialogue has also been widely used. In the process of foreign language teaching, we can also actively promote students' man-machine dialogue practice based on the teaching content, consolidate their foreign language cognition, and promote the cultivation of their foreign language practice and communication ability. To be specific, first of all, we can use information technology to promote students' foreign language human-machine dialogue practice. For example, we can use the existing computer room and other facilities in the school to promote the construction of “foreign language training room” to provide students with a convenient platform for man-machine practice, and then design the corresponding dialogue practice content based on the teaching content to promote the reinforcement and improvement of students' foreign language ability. Secondly, we should also do a good job of process guidance, actively pay attention to the problems encountered by students in man-machine dialogue, and provide corresponding guidance and guidance in time. For example, when some students make mistakes in man-machine dialogue, we can help them correct their mistakes at the first time, promote their standardized use of foreign languages, and cultivate their good foreign language pragmatic habits^[12]. Moreover, we can also introduce the “human-machine dialogue” teaching into the daily foreign language teaching, for example, in the course teaching, we can design a “5-minute human-machine dialogue” link, so that students can preheat in advance to lay the foundation for their subsequent foreign language learning, further stimulate their learning interest and vitality, and promote the improvement and development of their comprehensive foreign language ability.

3.5. Optimizing teaching evaluation based on data technology

As an important module of college foreign language teaching, teaching evaluation is an important support for testing the teaching effect and promoting the teaching reform. The significance of doing this part well is not only to enable us to better grasp the students' learning situation, and then implement effective educational reform measures to improve the teaching quality, but also to help students find a suitable learning path and promote their growth and development. However, the traditional college foreign language teaching is mainly based on achievement and outcome evaluation, and the teaching model is not targeted enough, which also affects the quality of foreign language teaching^[13]. In this regard, in the information era, we should also rely on big data technology to reform and optimize teaching evaluation, constantly improve the quality of teaching evaluation, and promote the growth and development of students. To be specific, first of all, we can use the big data platform to promote accuracy and reliability. For example, we can rely on big data technology to guide students to carry out digital examination questions, digital dialogue exercises and other forms of assessment, give full play to the convenient operation and accurate assessment functions of big data, so that students can practice and take tests anytime and anywhere, and grasp students' foreign language learning problems on this basis.

Secondly, we can make use of the intelligent analysis and recommendation function of big data to accurately analyze the foreign language learning situation of students, grasp the common and individual problems, and based on its intelligent recommendation function, provide personalized learning plans for students, help them better grasp their learning situation, find their shortcomings, and carry out targeted learning and practice to promote the effective improvement of their comprehensive foreign language ability^[14].

3.6. Apply foreign language software to consolidate the teaching effect

In the information era, we should also pay attention to the application of foreign language network software, provide students with personalized learning and practice guidance, and promote their foreign language communication ability and cross-cultural awareness. To be specific, in the teaching process, on the one hand, we can guide students to use "foreign language exchange" transfer to have daily conversations with foreign friends to promote their foreign language learning and contact after class, and effectively promote the cultivation of their foreign language cross-cultural ability; On the other hand, we can guide students to download some foreign language software, and then carry out foreign language learning and contact according to their own needs. For example, we can guide students to download software such as "Foreign Language Communication" and "Baici-dao," so that they can choose corresponding foreign language scenarios and contact foreign language knowledge according to their own foreign language learning needs. Instead, they can choose movies, music and other materials they are interested in for independent study to help them develop good foreign language learning and practice habits, better consolidate the effect of foreign language teaching, and promote students' foreign language learning and ability development^[15].

4. Conclusion

In short, in the information era, foreign language teaching in colleges and universities has ushered in a new opportunity for reform. In this regard, teachers should deeply grasp the value and significance of the information era in foreign language teaching, and constantly explore new teaching paths based on informatization, digitalization, networking and wisdom in teaching practice to create a new mode of foreign language teaching based on informatization, lead students to better learn and grow, and help them go further and fly higher in the future.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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