

The Application of Multimedia Technology in the English Writing Teaching

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ABSTRACT: *Towards the sole mode of English writing and less enthusiasm in English writing, this thesis is aimed to explore the application of multimedia technology in English writing in order to diversify the mode of English writing. Under the diversified mode, both students' enthusiasm in English writing and teachers' forms of classroom organization will get improved.*

KEYWORDS: *multimedia technology, English writing, application.*

Date of Submission: 24-11-2020

Date of Acceptance: 08-12-2020

I. INTRODUCTION

The significant mark of technology is that with the fast development of multimedia technology, the traditional mode of English writing could not fit for the modern teaching situation. Not only does multimedia technology help teachers improve their teaching mode of English writing and enhance their ability of arranging the classroom dynamically but also it broadens the methods of checking students' exercise and improves students' ability of English writing. Therefore, this topic has certain practical significance.

A growing amount of research about English writing turns up. It is not easy to list all of the research completely and specifically. The general situation is as the following: some scholars make research from the viewpoint of Cooperative Learning in English writing, such as, Chen Yuling(2002)[1], Yang Yingchun(2010)[2], Cui Jingru(2015)[3] and so on; some researchers give their research about English writing based on Constructivism Learning, for example, Tan Shiyi(2003)[4], Cao Jia, Yuan Hui(2010)[5], Wang Jing (2014) [6]and so on; Some scholars focus on Task-based Learning Teaching to discuss English teaching, for instance, Xu Huishang(2008)[7], Liu Jingjing(2015)[8] and so on. To sum up, all the scholars above discuss English writing teaching from Cooperative Learning, Constructivism Learning and Task-based Learning Teaching. However, this thesis intends to discuss the English writing teaching based on multimedia technology.

II. MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY

Under the background of the rapid development of modern technology, people have stepped in the age of internet and big data. When it comes to multimedia technology, "Network and multimedia technologies combine the graph, writing, sound, animation, phantom and so on with the course content organically, enabling the learners to use multiple sense organs." [9]. The widespread amount of multimedia technology is mainly relying on the rapid development of Internet technology. In fact, multimedia technology is not a new shape of technology, but "an integrated application of technology that restructuring, optimization, and innovation of information from many areas" [10]. Multimedia refers to a new media application of combination by multimedia. Due to the feature of multimedia technology, which is integration, controllability, interactive and digital, it can be used in modern teaching. In modern teaching, the usage of multimedia technology is mainly reflected in the usage of Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Word, Internet technologies and Email. At the same time, based on the subject characteristics of English course, the role of multimedia technology in modern English teaching is reflected vividly.

On the classification of multimedia technology, different areas have different classification methods and standards. Multimedia refers to "using sound, pictures and film in addition to text on a screen" [11]. Multimedia technology is mainly divided into five parts based on the use of multimedia technology in every area: text media, sound media, graphic media, image media, animation and digital film. It is because of its features and advantages that make English teaching easier to organize and get achievement. It is urgent to improve the level of teachers' application of multimedia technology. In a word, the functions of multimedia technology in modern English teaching focus on modern English writing teaching.

III. THE PATTERN AND PROBLEMS OF TRADITIONAL ENGLISH WRITING TEACHING

It is obvious that English writing plays an important role in modern English learning. It means the output process of language. What's more, it is a process which is constant, exploring and creative. Traditional English writing has its insufficient aspects, such as, single mode, monotonous teaching content, which reduce the enthusiasm of students seriously. In the traditional English writing teaching, "English writing courses are often displayed in the form of language with the help of blackboard" [12]. The so-called teaching mode that is, under the guidance of certain teaching theory in order to achieve specific educational objectives that combine various elements of teaching activities and make the teaching program the external manifestation. The traditional mode of English writing is divided into three stages, namely the preparatory stage, the writing stage and the modification stage.

Preparatory Stage

As for the preparatory stage, the teaching target of preparation phase is enabling students to comprehend and master the material to form their own ideas and writing an outline under the guidance of a teacher. "Writing is based on a large number of listening and reading. There is input, there is output" [7]. The specific contents are as follows: reading and analyzing the material (text or graphics, etc.), broadening thinking, forming an opinion, taking notes and forming an outline.

Writing Stage

As for the writing stage, the teaching objectives of this stage are making students express their ideas by the form of writing on the basis of adequate preparation. In this session, students should integrate the words into sentences. "All kinds of writing are made up of sentences. If we want to write well, we should learn to write correct and good sentences" [13]. This process includes scratching, deliberating and finalizing.

Modification Stage

As for the modification stage, the modification process is a feedback mechanism which includes not only teachers' correcting and recommendations, but learning and exchanging among students. Both of their common targets are to make the student's essay more perfect. The achievement of traditional English writing mainly shows as scores which means teachers give points according to students' writing practice after teachers check students' English writing.

It is obvious that there are some problems in traditional English writing based on the analysis of traditional English writing model. There are many factors that lead to these problems, such as, the system of teaching materials, the limitation of class hours and the nature of the course. According to the analysis, there are three problems which are urgent to solve. For example, the obsolete writing material, the lack of supervision and guidance, as well as poor quality of correcting and long feedback cycle. The details are as below:

Firstly, "The material of English writing is so obsolete that the teaching could not keep pace with Internet in traditional English writing" [14]. It represents a universal phenomenon in traditional English writing. The first step of traditional English writing is vocabulary and grammar which means the vocabulary is the basis of an essay. From the view of traditional English writing, it can enhance students' ability of using English to express their own opinion; but on the other hand, most of these vocabularies are essential words which lack of ideas and the sense of times. Meanwhile, students usually rote without thinking so that they could not understand what the real meaning of the writing topic is.

Secondly, there would not be too much explanation and demonstration after teachers decorated the writing topic. It is close between reading and writing through which students can learn basic abilities and skills of English writing. Due to the limited time, teachers spend too much time in analyzing the text and homework so that there is no time to explain the writing part. Usually, teachers overlook the English writing. This situation causes such problem that "students imitate the model essays or paragraphs without thinking by their own heads and they can't use their imagination and creativity. In another word, their knowledge and skills of writing are difficult to be digested" [15].

Thirdly, there are also other problems, such as, long feedback cycle of English writing, students' writing level is not high, and students are of poor enthusiasm in the traditional English writing. In the modern English teaching, there is writing task once a month. Based on the current reality of the total number of students in each class, for these writing tasks, teachers will not have enough time to correct, instead of using random sampling or modified by deskmates. Among the essay in those spot check, the modified compositions, mostly just ticked or grant date, some are plus a short comment or score.

IV. THE APPLICATION OF MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY IN ENGLISH WRITING TEACHING

With the application of modern multimedia technology in modern teaching, it has made significant changes in modern teaching mode and the teaching achievement has gone up significantly. Next, this thesis puts its main focus on the application of multimedia technology in the English writing based on the Process Approach, Learning Autonomy and Interaction.

Process Approach raised in the eighth decade of last century in America. It is believed that English writing is a sort of thinking process, which consists of a series of steps to find out problems, analysis problems and finally solve the problems. For example, planning, drafting, revising and editing. Process Approach is different from the traditional English writing teaching which Process Approach regards communication theory as the theoretical foundation. It focuses on the ability of students' writing process and writing ability. Due to limitations of traditional teaching conditions, this method has some difficulties in implementation.

Generally speaking, Process Approach is divided into three parts: pre-writing, while-writing and post-writing. Here is an example named as "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Internet":

Pre-writing

Firstly, there is a warming-up, for instance, playing a video about "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Internet". It can rise students' interest and make the class active. That is what Xing Cuiling said "change the teaching center of classroom" [16].

Secondly, students can use the method of brainstorm to reflect the advantages and disadvantages of Internet they have noticed. "Brainstorming is a form of classroom activities to stimulate students' creative thinking" [2]. It helps students understand their own writing process and make full use of students' innovation.

Thirdly, teacher can divide students into several groups. This method is also seen in Cooperation Teaching. "During the group discussion everyone should act themselves seriously and assume the duty of them" [3]. They can discuss their opinions and elect the team leader to do the presentation. Finally, students will make the outline.

For example,

[eg.1] Part1. Introduction

Part2. Main body

a. The advantages of Internet (e.g. convenient, sufficient)

b. The disadvantages of Internet (e.g. be absorbed in the Internet, dangerous)

Part3. Conclusion

While-writing

In this stage, not only should teachers help students do mind training, but give students the guidance of how to retouch the language and arrange the text structure. Now, teachers can make the full use of Internet to search some video or samples about this topic. By this, students can open their eyesight and make their writing task easier.

Post-writing

The main purpose of this stage is emendations and feedback. Modifications will give students the opportunities to pond over their writing work and catch sight of their strength and weakness. For instance, students can comprehend the views of other students and then modify their content of the first draft by group discussions. After the discussion, students will send their final draft in the form of e-mail. Next, teachers will provide assistances to students in time. The amendment itself is to improve the quality of writing. At this point, a complete writing is done.

To sum up, it is significant that Process Approach is different from the traditional writing teaching. The former is based on the communication theory, which focuses on the students' ability in English writing and helps students understand their own writing process clearly. The Process Approach is similar with Task-based Learning Teaching in the manner of partitioning. "Task-based Learning Teaching is divided into three parts: pre-task, while-task and post-task" [8].

At present, the main learning autonomy teaching models are scaffolding instruction model, anchored instruction model and random-access instruction model. Though Learning Autonomy has a variety of forms, but their similarities, that is, they include situational teaching, collaborative learning, and complete the construction of knowledge on the basis of this knowledge by the learner himself. From this meaning, autonomous learning is in accordance with the view of students in constructivism. "Students' learning is neither a vacant container waiting for holding knowledge, nor a whiteboard scribbling without thinking" [4:78]. Then this thesis will analyze the application of multimedia technology in information gathering, writing guidance and writing

feedback.

Firstly, Internet technology is informative, convenient and efficient. Therefore, in the information gathering phase, on the one hand, students can gather information with a wide range of channels; on the other hand, students can experience a large number of materials and do some meaningful interaction in a realistic way.

Secondly, during the writing process, students can complete the writing task by themselves. For instance, they can look up some unfamiliar words in electronic dictionaries and search for some fixed syntactic patterns in the Internet.

Thirdly, after self-checking, students can send their writing work to teachers by e-mail. Then, teachers will provide assistances to students in time to heighten their writing ability. Except for teachers' help, students can use some checking application on the Internet to check their writing task. To some extent, Learning Autonomy is similar with cooperation learning. "Cooperation Learning advocates that teachers should establish the concept of student-centered and promote students to interact with each other during the learning process" [1].

Here is an example named as "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Internet":

During the topic of "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Internet", first of all, students can search for some materials which they need through the computer. There are many channels, such as, Baidu, Google and Bing and so on. There are also some teaching audios about the advantages and disadvantages of Internet through which students can learn some writing skills and writing guidance independently.

When they are writing, there are usually some problems. Maybe they will face some professional terms which they have not noticed, such as attack, breach, cipher, CSNW NetWare and so on. Under the theory of Learning Autonomy, students should find out the measures to problems by themselves. For instance, they can look up in the electronic dictionaries.

To be concluded, Learning Autonomy fits on the theory of lifelong learning. The application of multimedia technology based on the Learning Autonomy will help students become more and more positive.

Interactive teaching refers to the teaching environment by creating a multilateral interaction to blend different views, and motivate both teachers and students' enthusiasm on the equality of the two parties. Today, interactive teaching is an important manifestation of democratic education and the most commonly applied teaching methods in modern teaching. It requires the cooperation of two sides. Its main feature lies in the teaching process of "communication" and "dialogue".

Here is an example based on the topic of "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Internet":

Firstly, in the early period, teachers will play some videos about the topic to make class atmosphere active. Under the guidance of interaction teaching, teachers should point out some questions and divide students into several groups.

For example,

[eg.2] What is Internet?

[eg.3] What do you think of Internet?

[eg.4] What are the advantages and disadvantages of Internet?

[eg.5] How is the Internet effect human's daily life and works?

[eg.6] What should we do for the disadvantages of Internet?

By this way, students will explore the topic little by little under the guidance of these questions. At last, every group should elect the team leader and present their achievements. By the end of the presentation, teachers should summary what students had discussed.

Secondly, after the first draft, students exchange their first draft from each other. Next, teachers collect and select some representative samples to make an expounding presentation. For example, teachers can use PowerPoint to explain students' essays. Teachers can not only inspire the students' enthusiasm and pride, but also provide a platform for other students to learn from each other by showing students' work and reviews the highlights in class. After the explaining, students will modify the first draft again and then send the modified writing work by e-mail to their teachers. Finally, teachers evaluate student's writing seriously and give both advice and scores.

From the angle of teaching ideas, teaching methods and the relationship between teachers and students, interaction is better than traditional teaching methods. It requires both students and teachers to put themselves into the process of English writing. In short, interactive teaching reflects the interactions between teaching and studying, which makes the teaching process a coherent one.

V. CONCLUSION

English writing course is the basic course of English teaching. If we really want to improve students' ability of English writing, the key point is to make full use of the application of multimedia technology in the English writing teaching. First of all, the government should take positive and effective measures to advance teachers' ability of using the multimedia technology. For example, offering on-the-job training, holding

competition on teaching technical ability and so on. Then, Teachers should not only grasp the knowledge of multimedia technology, but improve their education ability. For instance, teachers should be able to use correct teaching strategies to solve the difficulties in teaching. At last, students should fully arouse their enthusiasm and interest to improve their ability of English writing under the teachers' instruction. Although there is still some limitation in this thesis, it will be an inspiration for further studies.

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HuiminHao. "The Application of Multimedia Technology in the English Writing Teaching." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI)*, vol. 09(11), 2020, pp 44-48. Journal DOI- 10.35629/7722