A Practical Research on Student-centered Mode in College English Teaching

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Keywords: Student-centered Mode; College English; Teaching Reform

Abstract: Nowadays student-centered mode has become the new educational concept of higher education in China in the 21st century. Different from traditional mode, student-centered mode stresses giving full play to students' subjective initiative in learning and requires teachers to help students acquire abilities and skills of learning English language. This paper is guided by the educational concept of student-centered mode and explores the principles and strategies of making use of this teaching mode in college English teaching.

1. Introduction

College foreign language education is an important component of higher education in China, contributing significantly to the coordinated development of college students' knowledge, ability, and overall quality. College English, as the most important content of college foreign language education, is a required public basic course for most non-English majors in undergraduate education, and it plays an irreplaceable and significant role in talent development. According to the most recent *Guidance for College English Teaching*, published in 2020, the teaching objectives of college English course are to cultivate students' English application ability, to develop their cross-cultural communication consciousness, communication ability, and autonomous learning ability, and to improve comprehensive cultural quality, allowing them to effectively use English in study, life, social interaction, and future work. Clearly, the outdated teacher-centered teaching mode is no longer capable of meeting the needs of college English teaching in the modern era. As a result, effective and efficient teaching methods should be investigated and implemented.

The origins of client-centered or person-centered psychotherapy, which emphasizes a person-to-person relationship between the therapist and the client, can be traced back to Carl Rogers (1902–1987), an American psychologist. In essence, student-centered teaching encourages learners to take the initiative in learning language through observation, analysis, and summarizing. It is a teaching method that promotes learner-centered language learning. Under the direction of teachers, students become active language users rather than remaining submissive and passive recipients of instruction. This type of teaching methodology can not only maximize students' capacity for independent thought, but it can also enhance the effectiveness of their self-directed learning and deepen the impact of their language learning. Student-centered teaching is distinct from traditional language instruction and includes unique and cutting-edge teaching elements.

2. Thoughts and Principles to Create Student-centered Mode in College English Teaching

2.1 Redefining the Roles of Teachers and Students in College English Teaching

We must reevaluate the responsibilities that instructors and students perform in order to develop a student-centered teaching method. The teacher-centered approach has been widely used in traditional language education, emphasizing the teachers' predominate role in teaching language concepts and communication skills. This approach largely ignores student participation and practice, gradually robbing them of their interest and autonomy in language learning. In contrast, while teaching in a student-centered manner, teachers serve as designers, organizers, directors, coordinators, collaborators and evaluators in the class. For instance, in teaching activities, students take on the roles of participants and subjects, and teachers' roles are to instruct students on how to complete these activities rather than make decisions on their behalf. Students should be actively

encouraged to use their language abilities by expressing their own ideas and opinions in a setting and environment that actively promotes language use. Teachers should utilize all of their skills when planning lessons for the classroom and do their best to establish a calm, engaging, democratic, and harmonious learning environment. This will greatly increase students' interest and initiative in learning English. As a result, students are eager to participate in various educational activities to demonstrate their language skills and academic progress.

2.2 Enhancing Competition and Emphasizing Knowledge Update

It is vital to design a competitive college English class to stimulate student participation in college English teaching. Since a sense of competition is a crucial quality for modern college students, college English instruction should simulate a cooperative and competitive environment. College English courses should be taught using a variety of teaching methods, such as task-based teaching, project-oriented teaching, inquiry-based teaching, group-cooperation teaching, and others in the purpose of better cultivating students' sense of competition and cooperation and improving the teaching effect of college English course, which will help to create a competitive mechanism for learning new languages. In order to create a competitive learning environment, teachers should put up a number of competitive English activities where students can compete to show who knows more, who can explain things more clearly, and who has more opinions. Modern college students should not only have solid practical knowledge, but also a broad outlook, which is crucial for those who study foreign languages. In the teaching process, teachers should provide students with fresh ideas of the new era. In college English classroom, teachers should integrate practical topics in the world and hot topics in life into classroom teaching, which requires teaching materials, teachers' ideas and knowledge accumulation to keep pace with the times.

2.3 Focusing on the Practical Application of English and Improving Teaching Environment

Learning English in college involves more than just theoretical study; it also involves practical application. We should therefore focus more on students' abilities to use English realistically while using a student-centered teaching approach. College students today think more critically because of the surroundings and current modernized schooling with the help of the Internet. In order to follow student-centered teaching approach, teachers should provide students more display space in their instruction of practical English. To help students better use their theoretical knowledge of English and to improve their capacity to articulate themselves, teachers should do a good job of leading the role, incorporate real-world scenarios into English study, or allow students give a brief speech and voice their ideas. In the process of teaching English, teachers should focus on students' practical application of the language as well as their theoretical learning aptitude, in order to set them up for success in the future. In order to provide students with English language application materials with communicative skill as the core, it is important for college English education to focus more on mobilizing students' non-intellectual components and creating a learning atmosphere where students can practice listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students will automatically use English they have learned to communicate in this environment if the classroom environment is conducive to learning the language, which will help them learn language more quickly.

3. Strategies to Fulfill Student-centered Mode in College English Teaching

3.1 Stimulating Students' Interest and Mobilizing Students' Initiative in Learning

College English class featured with student-centered mode should fully reflect the dominant participation of students in the learning process. In order to achieve the teaching objectives, teachers should shoulder the responsibility of carefully designing teaching activities and encouraging students to participate in them. To be specific, for the task of oral English teaching, teachers can arrange students to voluntarily combine or randomly form several study presentation groups to perform dialogues and conversations in front of the class. This will not only effectively stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning English but also help teachers to evaluate the outcomes of both

teaching and learning. For the teaching task of text reading or reading comprehension, teachers can design different levels of questions from easy to difficult based on the text itself, and make use of task-driven method to guide the students to find the answers to different levels of questions in the purpose of helping students to clarify the text structure and understand the content. Teachers can also adopt teaching method such as group discussion and group summary to help students understand the humanistic value of the text, spur their critical thinking and improve students' humanistic quality.

3.2 Adopting Hierarchical teaching to Realize the Concept of Teaching Students in Accordance with Their Aptitude

The student-centered approach should emphasize the role of the learner as the primary topic of learning. Instructors can create matching teaching objectives and teaching materials after thoroughly studying learning conditions and teaching subjects. In terms of class division, educators can use hierarchical teaching based on the students' existing language foundation, which not only conforms to the three levels of teaching requirements proposed in *Guidance for College English Teaching* : basic target, intermediate target, and advanced target, but also assists teachers in using the objective laws of language learning to realize teaching targets. This would considerably reduce the phenomena in which students with a strong language basis believe the teaching is insufficient to satisfy their requirements, while students with a weak language foundation believe the teaching is too difficult to understand. Teachers should offer diverse teaching activities to different students after analyzing their students' knowledge base, personality characteristics, learning capacities, and learning attitudes. They should focus on offering students equitable opportunities to engage so that students may ask questions, answer questions, and actively discuss. They should allow all students to participate in classroom activities and increase learning passion so that every student views the classroom as their own stage. Teachers must completely understand their students, educate them according to their ability, satisfy the learning needs of students at various levels, and ultimately achieve instructional objectives.

3.3 Making Use of Flipped Classroom and the Second Classroom to Encourage Autonomic Learning

Flipped classroom teaching stresses "students practice first, teachers instruct afterwards," breaking the traditional teaching technique and focusing more on fostering students' self-study ability and professional knowledge application. The first component of flipped classroom instruction is that students use extracurricular time to gain knowledge. Teachers create their own educational films, and students may study independently by viewing videos. At the same time, instructors and students may communicate via the online communication platform, allowing students to report concerns to teachers on time. Secondly, during classroom instruction, students absorb knowledge. Teachers design classroom instruction to help students handle difficulties in their autonomous learning; that is, teachers answer questions and resolve doubts, and students engage in learning. Teachers are not only imparters of a single information point, but also instructors and organizers of classroom teaching, returning the teaching initiative to students so that students may apply knowledge cooperatively and improve their cooperative learning capacity.

Flipped classroom teaching highlights the students' subjectivity in the classroom, fully arouses the subjective enthusiasm, and increases the interaction between teachers and students, so that the instructors' teaching has a target. In cooperative learning, students can develop their capacity for group cohesion and communication as well as internalise knowledge points. The flipped classroom restores the practical application of students' subject knowledge, enhances teacher-student contact, and modifies students' attitudes about learning. The course's curriculum typically begins with a problem-solving focus, and in practise, students will evaluate, study, and resolve problems using the materials provided by the instructor so that they may understand the process of knowledge experience and skill improvement. Although students have gained a great deal of independence throughout the learning process, they will also feel a sense of tension and urgency. Tension and pressure will also be transformed into the power of independent learning, enhancing independent

thinking and creative thinking. Learners can solve problems, explore tasks, and participate in group discussions without the assistance of teachers, allowing them to not only acquire professional knowledge but also cultivate their own social skills, team leadership, and teamwork skills through interaction with others.

Another way to stimulate subjectivity in the classroom is to provide students with a variety of second classroom activities, such as English speech contest, English film appreciation, Chinese and foreign expert lectures, British and American culture week, English corner, English report performance, as well as English listening, reading, writing competition, and so on. These activities provide students with opportunities and conditions for English information input and language communication, foster a positive environment and atmosphere for English learning, and encourage students' enthusiasm and initiative in their English learning. Teachers can encourage students to collect materials and plan classroom activities so that they feel respected by their teachers. At the same time, teachers should maximize students' learning needs and interests, improve learning efficiency, and promote student initiative and autonomy in learning.

3.4 Diversifying English teaching content and bringing Chinese culture into the classroom

Chinese culture is rich and complex. The study of English can incorporate topics like traditional Chinese medicine, historical towns, and ancient Chinese poetry. To assist students in examining other cultures on the basis of learning and mastering the fine traditional Chinese culture and absorbing the essence of those cultures, which can both increase students' motivation for learning and turn the tedious process of learning a foreign language into an exploration of an ancient civilization. Including ancient Chinese customs and culture in college English classrooms strengthens the cultivation and promotion of traditional communication, which is the most direct and efficient way to cultivate cross-cultural communication. In order to successfully realize the aim of effective communication between nations, we can encourage the effective blending of Chinese and Western culture and foster the inclusive, respectful, and open attitude of college students through comparative study of the two cultures.

The content of English learning should be optimized, and various traditional civilized customs from China should be included in the textbooks. This is one of the fundamental ways to improve the impact of Chinese culture in college English teaching. Almost all of the original pieces in the domestic college English textbooks and texts are taken from international journals and publications, and the majority of the content is about foreign traditions, lifestyles, and other topics. As a result, the traditional Chinese culture is seldom expressed in English. Therefore, the choice of college English teaching materials should be appropriate to include some introduction of Chinese folk culture in order to expand the knowledge of our traditional culture among modern college students, promoting their English language proficiency, as well as helping them fully realize the "student-centered" teaching practise.

4. Conclusion

The student-centered teaching approach, which starts with humanism as its foundation and completely takes into account the needs of students, is a reform of the conventional teaching approach. In order to better foster students' capacity for independent problem-solving, teachers must establish a favourable physical and psychological environment while they are teaching, as well as successfully mobilize students' excitement, initiative, and inventiveness. American and British academics have advanced the student-centered learning theory. When applying it to English education, we should integrate it with our own reality and our particular circumstance. It's important not to mechanically replicate it or swing from one extreme to the other. When teaching English, we should take into account all of the students' demands, recognize and respect their unique characteristics, encourage independent study, and heighten their desire in learning the language. Throughout the teaching process, teachers should continually reflect on their experiences and make improvements to their instructional strategies. Only in this way can we successfully improve college English teaching.

Acknowledgments

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