

A Study on College English Vocabulary Teaching Based on Mobile Learning

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Abstract: In order to enlarge students' vocabulary, this study uses mobile learning to teach college English vocabulary through convenient communication apps like WeChat and Chaoxingxuexitong. The study designed one class as the experimental class and the controlled class with 60 students of each. Some assisting tactics have been employed to the experimental class in the vocabulary mobile learning, but none for the controlled class. At the end of the semester, the experimental class and the control class were tested, and the result showed the average scores of the students in the experimental class are higher than those in the controlled class. So it can be seen that mobile learning not only helps students to master vocabulary better, but also has a significant effect on college English learning.

1. Introduction

Vocabulary teaching is a key part in college English teaching, and a suitable approach in vocabulary teaching can reap the multiple benefits in college English teaching. It is pointed out that "the comprehension of the meaning of words accounts for 39% of reading ability, vocabulary alone plays a 47% role in understanding the meaning of words in articles, and recognition accounts for 28% of reading speed."^[1] Therefore, the success or failure of vocabulary teaching depends on the proper methodological strategies of teaching and whether students can maintain (memorize) and use the target vocabulary for a long time.^[2] Mobile learning applied into the field of education brings about the fresh type of teaching and learning. The author uses WeChat and Chaoxingxuexitong to implement the mobile learning model, aiming to help students better grasp vocabulary and improve their English learning as a whole.

2. Application of Mobile Learning in Vocabulary Teaching

WeChat and are typical mobile learning platforms that are used more frequently, and students can download these two apps on their mobile phones to carry out ubiquitous learning in network environment with the supervision and management of the teacher and the peers.

2.1. Public Account in WeChat

The teacher mainly uses WeChat public account Cidaren. First of all, a vocabulary class group with the experimental class students was established, and then proper English vocabulary learning course for this semester was selected. The teacher regularly posted different vocabulary tasks (mainly including pronunciation, semantics, parts of speech, usage, example sentences, exercises) according to the curriculum settings, clarifying the effective time and deadline of the task. At the same time, teacher launched targeted vocabulary test, so as to achieve the goal of combination of testing and learning, and deepen students' memory for the vocabulary. The teacher could monitor the learning progress and completion quality of each student in the class from the public account Cidaren, and remind or talk on time to students whose tasks were falling behind the schedule or have unsatisfactory scores in the tasks. Besides, the teacher set up a performance incentive system to award those students who did best and who made progress in each tasks and tests.

On the other hand, in order to enhance the entertainment of English vocabulary learning, spark students' interest in vocabulary memorization, and test the effect of student recitation, the author

released a class vocabulary contest once a month in Cidaren, and announced the names of the top 20 students in the competition within the class and rewards them with some scores in class performance.

2.2. Chaoxingxuexitong

Chaoxingxuexitong is a typical mobile learning platform which students can download on their mobile phone to carry out ubiquitous learning. This App is often used as a supplement to the traditional classroom teaching. The teacher set up a class with the students in Chaoxingxuexitong, then reasonably integrated and selected learning resources and provide them to students, so as to provide students with help for better independent learning. What's more, different forms of assignment can be given to the students, like reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar and so on. Students could see their scores and right answers instantly once they submitted their objective homework. For the subjective assignments like presentation, writing and translation, the teacher and students could give a reasonable score respectively according to quality of the assignment. Furthermore, a good assignment with high scores could be set in the App so as to be seen, discussed and learned by each student in the virtual class.

In order to cultivate students' habit of independent learning in the mobile learning environment, teachers can use certain supervision and motivational means to emphasize students' independent learning. In the Chaoxingxuexitong, the viewing of some courseware will be interspersed with questions in the courseware that students need to answer, which ensures that students must watch the learning courseware in its entirety to obtain the corresponding learning nodes. In addition, teachers can view the learning progress of different students by logging on to Chaoxingxuexitong on the teacher's side, and then supervise students with slow progress to work hard.

2.3. Combining mobile learning with traditional class teaching

At present, various mobile learning software and mobile phone Apps are emerging in an endless stream, with different advantages and disadvantages for each one, so teachers cannot rely too much on this new type of learning method, let alone completely ignore the role of traditional classrooms. Ding Changsheng believes that the two should be effectively combined, and that their balance point should be found so as to achieve complementary advantages, assisting and expanding classroom teaching with mobile learning, constraining and monitoring mobile learning with classroom teaching, and finally utilizing the value of mobile learning to the greatest extent. ^[3]

In addition, with combination of mobile learning and traditional classroom teaching, teachers can provide help to students anytime and anywhere, make up for the lack of teacher-student communication in the traditional classroom, help to better cultivate the emotions of college students, and achieve equal emphasis on emotional education and rational education, complementing each other^[4] With these teacher-student interactions, students' motivation to memorize words is stimulated, and the effect of vocabulary mobile learning is more prominent.

3. Procedure

Research procedure was divided into three phases: pre-phase, while-phase and post-phase.

3.1. Pre-Phase

At the beginning of the research, there were much preparatory work to do in the first stage. The students in the class were required to download the mobile phone application called Chaoxingxuexitong and register in the public account Cidaren in Wechat in their smart phones. And then, the author built Cidaren class Chaoxingxuexitong class and invited each student to join in. They were convenient for instant communication and information sharing between the teacher and all the students. And students were asked to get familiar with the main functions of the two learning tools in a short time.

Also, a proper vocabulary course was chosen according to students' learning goal in this semester and paper-print materials for the class need to be prepared in advance. And then the

teacher made a vocabulary plan for the students --- acquiring twenty-five new words in six day from Monday to Saturday, finishing a vocabulary test on every Sunday,so students could check their learning result by themselves and the teacher could monitor each student's learning progress.

3.2. While-phase

There was a deadline for every task, so subjects had to finish the task on time or they would not get their usual-time grades. After weekly learning via Cidaren, students were required to write down the new words and their meaning from memory on the paper on Monday morning and hand their paper to their group leader, who need to check the work of each group member and give the teacher the good ones and their names. The teacher would keep a weekly record of the names of the students who did great in the task and award them in class performance score.

For Chaoxingxuexitong, there was also a deadline for every task with different forms like reading comprehension, text new word recording, objective exercises, writing,and so on. The students have to finish those tasks on time and the teacher would check the learning records and randomly examined several words that the they have learned during the week in class. Besides, the teacher would have a five-minute vocabulary test in the class about the words and phrases they learned in Cidaren, sometimes in form of matching, sometimes in form of blank filling, and sometimes multiple choice. After the test, the teacher will give students a feed back by announcing the students who did well in the test and then explaining the reason for their common mistakes.

3.3. Post-Phase

In the last phase of the research procedure, some vital assessment and analysis work were completed. At the 16th week of this semester, students both in experimental group and control group were required to take the post-tests which contained all the vocabulary they learned this semester with the same question types to check if mobile learning was effective in vocabulary leaning.

4. Results

The sample source of the experimental class and control class post test was the vocabulary required to be mastered in the syllabus of the second semester of college English. Besides, the two classes were required to take a paper final examination. The two papers are different, with a total score of 100.

After a semester of vocabulary learning, the average score of vocabulary test and final examination for the experimental class was as high as 72.3, and 67.5 points respectively, much higher than the scores of the controlled class, 63.4 and 55.8 respectively, indicating the effectiveness of mobile learning.

5. Conclusion

Information age and mobile learning have brought enormous changes to English vocabulary learning and memorizing. Compared with the paper-print learning, mobile vocabulary learning possesses its own unique advantages: flexibility of space and time, immediate feedback and reinforcement.^[5]

Using mobile mode to learn college English vocabulary helps to improve the enthusiasm of college students to learn vocabulary...by provides students with valuable learning materials that meet their own learning characteristics^[6].

In conclusion, students' perception of mobile learning turns out to be relatively beneficial, positive and promising, it can play a valuable role in self-directed vocabulary leaning under the proper supervision from the teachers and will arose students' learning interest.

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