

Experiential Method in the Instruction of Humanistic Knowledge in Advanced English

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Abstract: When foreign language learners reach a certain level in foreign language learning, they find that the obstacles to foreign language learning do not come from the difficulty of language learning, but from the lack of social and cultural knowledge related to the target language and the ability of comprehension, induction and reasoning on the basis of understanding these humanistic knowledge. In the senior stage of foreign language teaching, the teacher should attach importance to the teaching of humanistic knowledge. Four experiential teaching methods are multimedia experience method, situational experience method, transposition experience method and communication experience method. They can give full play to students' initiative and establish a student-centered teaching mode, thus effectively enhancing the instruction effect of humanistic knowledge involved in the advanced English teaching and cultivating students' humanistic quality.

1. Introduction

The thought of experiential teaching and learning has a long history both at home and abroad, but it was only in the 1980s that the experience idea was used in teaching. Since the American educator David Kolb put forward the theory of experiential learning in 1984, the domestic and foreign educational circles began to pay attention to this teaching method. Since the mid-1990s, the research on combing and introducing experiential teaching concept has been carried out in China [1]. From the literature data collected by CNKI, there was only 1 article published in 1994 while the number increased to more than 1000 in 2018. These studies focused on the introduction of the concept, or the application of the concept in primary and secondary school teaching. The research results on the application of experiential teaching in higher education were not rich enough, and mainly focused on the application of experiential teaching method in ideological and political education, physical education and spoken language education, Chinese writing and reading teaching, etc.

The research results of advanced English teaching in China are far less than those of basic courses such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. According to the information collected by CNKI, since the beginning of this century, more than 200 papers on advanced English teaching have been annually published. Among these research results, the combination of experiential teaching method and advanced English teaching is rare, and the research results of humanistic education in advanced English teaching are countless. The experiential teaching method gives full play to students' initiative, beneficial for the establishment of a student-centered teaching mode and the effective enhancement of the teaching effect of advanced English, especially the teaching effect of humanities knowledge in advanced English courses. The experiential teaching method is an important practical teaching method; therefore, it is in line with the trend of college teaching reform to explore the application of experiential teaching method in advanced English teaching to achieve the goal of whole-person education.

2. Theoretical and Practical Significance

The fundamental goal of foreign language education is to promote the overall development of students, that is, to promote and develop students' language ability, thinking quality, cultural

awareness and learning ability in an all-round way through foreign language education [2]. As early as 1998, the Ministry of Education promulgated *Several Opinions on Strengthening the Cultural Quality Education of College Students*, pointing out that university education should improve the “cultural taste, aesthetic taste, humanistic accomplishment and scientific quality” of College students. In 2000, the *Syllabus of English Teaching for English Majors in Colleges and Universities* pointed out that the cultivation of compound English talents should be carried out blindly, but this does not mean that the cultivation of compound English talents should be guided by occupations. English is a branch of humanities. The basic elements of English are English language, literature and culture [3]. With the further expansion of the trend of economic globalization, the implementation of the strategy of “One Belt and One Road” and the going out of Chinese culture, the demand for English professionals has changed substantially in 21st Century. Improving the quality of personnel training and meeting the needs of multiple talents has become the mainstream voice of higher education in China. Therefore, in accordance with the situation, foreign language education should adhere to the concept of humanistic education. According to the *National Standard for the Quality of Undergraduate English Teaching*, the core idea of the new curriculum system is humanistic education and the concept of pluralistic talents [4]. Humanistic education, unlike a single vocational or technical education, is not aimed at any utilitarian or practical purpose of education. Newman once pointed out that “the training of humanistic education is not for specific or accidental practical purposes, nor for specific industrial or vocational purposes, or for academic or scientific research purposes, but for humanistic education itself, for the sake of receiving humanistic education and entering universities, for the sake of humanistic education, which is the highest idea of humanistic education.” [5] Therefore, foreign language education should attach great importance to the cultivation of students’ humanistic quality.

Traditionally, advanced English courses are regarded as language skills courses. For example, Fan Nengwei and Wang Aiqin classified comprehensive English courses as language skills courses. Cultural literacy courses include “English and American literature, Western humanities classics, Chinese ideological classics, general theory of Chinese culture, cross-cultural communication, British and American society and culture” [6]. However, we believe that the advanced English curriculum should aim at the cultivation of humanistic quality by relying on content, and language acquisition is just a natural result. As one of the main courses for senior English majors, advanced English courses focus on reading and appreciating English and American original texts, aiming at improving students’ language skills and strengthening the humanities and social sciences education in literature, history, philosophy and art for English majors. In advanced English teaching, it is determined by the essence of English education to attach importance to the cultivation of students’ humanistic quality, and it is one of the important ways to realize humanistic education by giving weight to students’ experience and practice.

Combining experiential teaching method with advanced English humanistic education provides an effective perspective for advanced English teaching. It puts into practice an effective experiential teaching method suitable for advanced English humanistic knowledge education. This enables students to actively inquire, read, absorb, share and discuss humanistic knowledge related to courses on the basis of experiencing facts, experiencing problems, experiencing process and experiencing cooperation. Then, it internalizes the corresponding humanistic knowledge in the form of “writing” and constructs the humanistic meaning based on the subject’s own understanding. Thus, the “instrumental teaching” nature of English in the past is reformed. Emphasizing practice and humanistic quality training of English talents meets the requirements of talent training in the 21st century.

3. Basic Connotation

This study explores experiential teaching methods suitable for advanced English humanities education. This study mainly explores four experiential teaching methods: multimedia experience method, situational experience method, transposition experience method and communication experience method. Multimedia method mainly refers to teachers instructing students to use the

network to complete the collection, collation and editing of videos, audio and text materials related to the text, and then to make PPT for presentation and sharing in class. Multimedia technology has greatly enriched the modes of presenting information materials, enriched the choice of information acquisition strategies for people's perception channels (vision, hearing, etc.), especially the powerful image function of multimedia computers, the integration function of voice, image and text, which has aroused people's interest in the research of multimedia presentation to promote meaningful learning [7]. Educational psychology and educational technology researchers represented by Mayer R.E. have done a lot of in-depth research on multimedia learning and established the cognitive theory of multimedia learning. He believes that properly designed assignments based on multimedia can improve students' learning performance [8]. In the implementation of multimedia teaching method, the teacher's formative guidance to students matters greatly to avoid possible formalism. The teacher should give appropriate guidance to students in collecting materials, compiling materials, making PPT and Exhibition links, so that students can make effective the 10-15 minutes' presentation time. The situational approach refers to the creation of an appropriate environment and a specific teaching situation according to the teaching content, together with explanations and related images, so that students can be immersed in the situation, be affected by emotions, aroused emotional resonance and be reasonable. Situational teaching method is a holistic, process-oriented, flexible, natural and humanized qualitative inquiry method [9]. This method is especially helpful for students to understand the humanistic knowledge that is far from the reality of their lives, say, learning articles related to American Indian culture, World War II and other topics. Effective audio-visual materials, scenario simulation and other means can build a bridge of emotional resonance for students. The method of transposition refers to the exchange of roles between teachers and students. Teachers think about students' needs from the perspective of students. Teachers formulate a level of attempt suitable for students' level. Students engage themselves in activities such as supplementary reading, translation, reading and recording of relevant humanistic knowledge articles in the process of attempting. In the implementation of this teaching method, the teacher should set feasible tasks for students and control the length of classroom time on the premise of fully understanding the basic situation of students' language and humanistic knowledge. At the same time, when students collect supplementary reading materials, the teacher should give clear requirements, including the source of articles, theme, language difficulty and number of articles. The communicative experience method mainly refers to the communication between students after class and between students and the teacher by telling stories, debating, writing and so on, so as to internalize the relevant humanistic knowledge.

4. Major Measures

The application of experiential teaching method in humanistic knowledge education in advanced English curriculum includes two aspects: classroom teaching and after-class development. The following measures are adopted to achieve this goal:

4.1 Optimizing with multimedia experience Method and Communication Experience Method in class.

According to the students' reality, a study group is set up to set up reasonable task objectives for students, guide them to collect relevant audio and video materials, make PPT of humanistic knowledge matched with the text, and share it in class. The methods of exhibition and sharing require diversification. Teachers should check the contents and methods of students' preparation before class and give guidance to students. Through practice, in this link, students mainly adopt multimedia experience method and communication experience method.

4.2 Making use of Situational Experience Method and Transposition Experience Method to Expand Teaching Space and Time after class.

Based on the textbooks, the teacher first leads the students to sort out the main information points of humanistic knowledge involved in the text. In view of the humanistic information which is close

to the current reality, we adopt the situational experience method. The implementation of this method includes making students interview relevant figures, rehearsing and shooting video sketches, painting reproduced in books, creating tracks, imagination description, etc. The transposition experience method is mainly used in collecting, rewriting and compiling reading questions of supplementary reading materials related to the humanities knowledge involved in the text.

5. Problems to be Noticed

Based on the author's experience in experiential teaching method, the author believes that the following problems should be paid attention to in the development of experiential teaching method in advanced English humanistic knowledge education:

5.1 Formative Supervision.

The network resources related to humanistic knowledge of texts are all-inclusive. It is a big problem for students to find the right resources and share them in the right way. The teacher should give students necessary guidance in the process of collecting materials and making multimedia courseware. For example, the resources that students may collect include blog articles. Teachers need to examine the content and language of articles, guide students to develop their ability to distinguish and think independently, and screen authoritative judgments. In the process of preparing multimedia courseware for students, teachers should give monitoring and guidance, including sharing content and methods, to check. Otherwise, this multimedia experience method would become a formality with little effect.

5.2 Suitable Choice of an Experiential Method.

Some texts seem to be far away from students' real life. For example, World War II, in order to arouse students' emotional resonance, teachers need to find appropriate entry points and make use of appropriate resources.

5.3 Effectiveness of Student-Student Cooperation.

In order to avoid experiential teaching method, we should pay attention to the extensiveness of participants and the design of experiential activities in which all participants participate [10]. Due to the limited classroom time, it is impossible for everyone to display and share relevant humanistic knowledge materials alone. It is more practical to carry out this activity by means of group cooperation. It requires clear division of labor, optimization of cooperation and refinement of team members' tasks

6. Summary

College education is a human-oriented education, and foreign language education should also take as an important goal the improvement of the humanistic quality of foreign language learners. When foreign language learners reach a certain level in foreign language learning, they find that the obstacles to foreign language learning do not come from the difficulty of language learning, but from the lack of social and cultural knowledge related to the target language and the ability of understanding, induction and reasoning on the basis of understanding these humanistic knowledge. Therefore, language teachers often find that students are helpless in an article without any new words or unfamiliar grammatical sentence structures. The education of humanistic knowledge should be given importance to solve the dilemma of foreign language teaching. Meanwhile, it is expected to help students internalize the humanistic knowledge which contains values, moral standards, attitudes towards life, aesthetic interest and modes of thinking, so as to improve their humanistic quality. Therefore, in the senior stage of foreign language teaching, we should attach importance to the teaching of humanistic knowledge. The humanistic knowledge involved in the advanced English course is very complicated. Students need not only to memorize, but also internalize it more importantly. Four experiential teaching methods, namely, multimedia experience method, situational

experience method, transposition experience method and communication experience method, can help students effectively absorb humanistic knowledge and cultivate their ability to discover and solve problems.

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