

The Practice of Flipped Classroom in Undergraduate English Reading Courses

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Abstract: *With the widespread popularity of Internet technology and new media in China, many modern teaching models and teaching tools have been gradually applied to undergraduate English reading classes. Flipped classroom is one of the most recognized models. This innovative teaching form not only expands the ways of knowledge transmission, but also has multiple teaching advantages in the classroom implementation process. This paper combines frontline teaching practice cases to analyze the current implementation status of flipped classroom in undergraduate English reading teaching, summarize its advantages and disadvantages in actual teaching, and propose corresponding countermeasures and suggestions.*

Keywords: Flipped classroom, Undergraduate English, English Reading Teaching.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid iteration of network technology has given birth to various online course resources such as MOOCs and digital online learning platforms. The traditional classroom structure has changed accordingly, and students have bid farewell to the passive listening state and actively engaged in learning and knowledge construction. However, flipped classroom has limitations in application. Some undergraduates have a poor foundation and lack the habit of autonomous learning. It is difficult to rely on this model to achieve ideal learning results; At the same time, contemporary college students prefer lively, interesting, and challenging teaching activities when learning English.

When carrying out undergraduate English reading teaching, teachers should combine the actual situation of the classroom, cleverly integrate online course resources to promote flipped classroom teaching, take into account the learning needs of different students, fully mobilize students' interest and subjective initiative in English learning, overall improve English reading level, and help students develop comprehensive literacy. How to use flipped classroom to improve undergraduate English reading teaching and enhance teaching effectiveness is a hot topic of discussion among teachers and students in current universities. The article conducts analysis based on the practical experience of frontline teaching, striving to provide feasible references for similar teaching research.

2. RESEARCH ON FLIPPED CLASSROOM BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

The theoretical prototype of flipped classroom originated from the Peer Instruction model proposed by Eric Mazur (Mazur, 1997), a physics professor at Harvard University. This model advocates students to watch teaching videos before class, preview course content, sort out learning doubts, and conduct focused discussions and exchanges in class to overcome key and difficult problems, providing early theoretical support for the core process of flipped classroom "self-study before class and internalization during class". In 2007, Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams, chemistry teachers at Woodland High School in the United States, first implemented the flipped teaching concept in the classroom, officially realizing the practical application of flipped classroom teaching. The two of them transferred the knowledge teaching process to extracurricular activities by recording teaching videos for students to preview independently; The classroom is no longer dominated by lectures, but by inspiring and guiding students to engage in discussions, exercises, and experiments to deepen their knowledge absorption. In 2011, flipped classrooms entered the stage of large-scale promotion in the United States, with Salman Khan's Khan Academy becoming a typical representative. The platform has produced and launched over 6500 interdisciplinary micro course videos, with course content gradually progressing from shallow to deep, building a systematic self-learning resource system. This measure has greatly promoted the popularization and promotion of flipped classrooms, making them widely used in frontline teaching and gaining universal recognition from the global education community.

The research and development of flipped classroom in China can be divided into three stages: The first stage is the

introduction of the embryonic stage (2012-2014), mainly focusing on concept introduction, theoretical interpretation, and foreign experience reference. Scholars mainly sort out the origin, connotation, theoretical basis, and foreign practice cases of flipped classroom, popularize the concept of flipped classroom teaching, and have not yet conducted large-scale localized practical research. The earliest systematic introduction to the core achievements of flipped classroom in China is the “Research on Flipped Classroom Teaching Mode” published by Zhang Jinlei, Wang Ying, and Zhang Baohui (2012). This article comprehensively summarizes the concept, core characteristics, and foreign practical paradigms of flipped classroom for the first time, establishes the basic theoretical framework for flipped classroom research in China, and officially opens the door for academic research on flipped classroom in China. At this stage, the overall research mainly focuses on theoretical reference and conceptual interpretation, mainly introducing advanced practical experience from abroad, and has not yet explored the implementation of localized teaching.

The second stage is the period of rapid development (2015-2019), where the research focus shifted from theoretical interpretation to practical application. Various schools and disciplines across the country have launched pilot projects for flipped classroom teaching, and the number of related empirical and case studies has surged. The academic community focuses on exploring the application models of flipped classrooms in various disciplines, summarizing local practical experience, and preliminarily sorting out existing problems in practice. Among them, Jinling (2015) proposed a micro course+flipped classroom integration model that is suitable for basic education based on the domestic learning situation in “Flipped Classroom and Micro Course Teaching Method”, providing a core reference for the practical implementation of flipped teaching in primary and secondary schools in China, and promoting the shift of research from pure theoretical reference to localized practical exploration in this stage.

The third stage is the period of deepening optimization (from 2020 to present), and research has entered a stage of refinement and high-quality development. With the advancement of information technology education and smart education, domestic research focuses on “technology empowerment, subject adaptation, quality and efficiency improvement, and literacy orientation”, abandoning the extensive research that blindly copied foreign models in the early days, and focusing on solving pain points in localization practice. The scientific and systematic nature of research has significantly improved. The Zhu Zhiting team (2021) proposed the concept of “Creative oriented Smart Flipped Classroom”, which promotes the flipped classroom from formal flipping to connotation improvement, in line with the core element of nurturing people, and leads a new research direction for the integration of flipped classroom technology and quality optimization in this stage.

3. THE APPLICATION OF FLIPPED CLASSROOM IN UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH READING TEACHING

3.1 Self study before class

The core of implementing flipped classroom in undergraduate English classrooms is for teachers to rely on online learning resources in advance and guide students to engage in self-directed inquiry based learning. In the pre class preparation stage, teachers need to collect supporting online materials based on the reading text theme, integrate teaching materials, and design pre learning tasks to help students clarify their reading objectives and grasp the overall theme of the text. At the same time, teachers can set inspiring thinking questions to stimulate students’ learning initiative, encourage them to consolidate existing knowledge and absorb new knowledge through thinking, and gradually improve their English comprehensive ability by reviewing the old and learning the new. Teachers should also provide diversified online digital learning resources to assist students in understanding English knowledge points in an intuitive and vivid manner, optimizing the overall reading and learning experience.

For example, when teaching under the theme of “Why We Should Travel Young”, the teacher first explains the background and concepts related to youth travel in different countries, guides students to collect travel related materials from young people in various countries through the internet, and completes imitation exercises based on the sentence structure of the text. After completing the preview task, students will upload it to the online teaching platform. The teacher will sort out and summarize the homework, and answer and comment on it one by one. At the same time, students will be organized to discuss and share their own opinions on the platform, in order to exercise their English expression and communication skills. Teachers combine the completion quality and feedback of all pre class assignments to accurately grasp students’ pre class learning outcomes, providing reliable basis for subsequent classroom rhythm control and teaching difficulty design.

3.2 Classroom Discussion and Answer

The undergraduate English reading classroom can be divided into three core components: micro lesson review to solidify prerequisite knowledge, classroom discussion to highlight key and difficult points in the text, and classroom review to provide feedback on learning outcomes. At the beginning of formal teaching, teachers can reserve a few minutes to play supporting teaching videos, leading students to review the pre class preview content, covering the main theme, cultural background, and core sentence patterns of the text, consolidating students' understanding of discourse knowledge points. At the same time, teachers encourage students to retell the context of the text, extract the main idea of paragraphs, and share personal opinions, in order to exercise students' logical thinking, discourse interpretation, and English oral expression abilities. For narrative and conversational texts, teachers can guide students to switch to the perspective of the characters in the text for thinking. Through immersive activities such as role-playing, situational interpretation, and continuation of the plot, students can deepen their understanding of the deep connotations of the text and enrich their language learning experience. For the core difficulties of the text, teachers can design fill in the blank and question and answer tasks to guide students to focus on key learning points. During the entire class process, teachers need to promptly correct students' language expression omissions, provide targeted evaluations, coordinate various classroom activities, and effectively improve the overall teaching effectiveness.

3.3 Post class evaluation analysis

After class evaluation analysis relies on a multi subject evaluation model, combined with various assessment methods such as student self-evaluation, group peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation, to comprehensively consider the overall performance of students' pre class micro lesson preparation quality, classroom discussion and speech, text interpretation results, etc. This evaluation breaks away from the traditional summative assessment that solely relies on paper assignments to determine learning level, and can objectively identify the shortcomings in students' reading and learning. Teachers rely on evaluation feedback to identify teaching loopholes, make targeted adjustments to micro course content and classroom exploration tasks, continuously optimize the entire teaching design, and thus build a teaching loop that connects the beginning and end, steadily improving the teaching quality of undergraduate English reading courses.

4. THE SHORTCOMINGS OF FLIPPED CLASSROOM IN UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH READING TEACHING

At present, there are obvious problems in the English teaching process of undergraduate colleges in China, namely, emphasizing the cultivation of students' professional skills while neglecting English basic teaching, and students' insufficient understanding of the importance of English courses (Gan Ping et al., 2017). In addition, undergraduate students have weak English foundations, weak learning enthusiasm, and difficulty in sustained concentration. Traditional English classroom teaching methods are relatively single and inefficient, making it difficult to arouse students' interest and enthusiasm (Xu Qian, 2018). The flipped classroom teaching model has provided a new solution to this issue, injecting vitality into traditional teaching methods, enhancing students' classroom participation, diversifying teaching process design, and stimulating students' interest in learning. But with the advancement of the curriculum, the flipped classroom teaching model has also exposed some shortcomings.

4.1 Reading Classroom Classes Squeeze Time for Deep Text Exploration

Although the Internet provides a wealth of educational and teaching resources, the quality is uneven. Teachers need to select teaching resources that are consistent with teaching content and students' learning experience, and integrate them to meet students' actual learning needs. However, due to the limitations of teachers' time and energy, it is difficult to ensure that the teaching resources they produce achieve the expected results, as they also need to undertake tasks such as homework grading, pre class preparation, and answering questions while performing classroom teaching tasks. At the same time, although English teachers have high professional skills in English teaching, they generally lack knowledge in information technology, especially in the use of professional software such as video, image, and audio. Once the quality of micro lesson videos cannot be guaranteed, the effectiveness of flipped classrooms in the future will be greatly reduced.

4.2 There is still room for optimization in the teaching process

As the semester progresses into its latter stages, students' initial novelty towards flipped classrooms gradually fades, leading to a decline in their learning enthusiasm. It is quite common to see students perfunctory in pre-class independent exploration and in-class group discussions. Classroom discussions exhibit a clear polarization, with students who have a stronger foundation dominating all interactions, while those with weaker foundations remain silent and observant, lacking opportunities for independent thinking and expression throughout the process. Additionally, most undergraduate English courses are taught in large classes, and class time is limited. Teachers find it challenging to cater to every student and provide one-on-one targeted guidance, making it difficult to guide all students in conducting in-depth textual exploration. These issues highlight significant shortcomings in the design of group activities and classroom process planning for current flipped classrooms, indicating considerable room for optimization and improvement in the overall teaching process.

4.3 Single evaluation subject

The current evaluation of flipped reading classrooms is mainly based on teacher's single evaluation, lacking student self-evaluation and peer evaluation, and the evaluation dimensions are one-sided. Traditional one-way evaluation relies solely on teachers' subjective judgment and cannot fully record the entire process of students' pre class preparation and classroom text discussion, making it difficult to accurately identify the shortcomings in students' self-directed learning and text interpretation. A single evaluation system cannot objectively measure students' true reading level, nor can it reverse adjust classroom processes, which restricts the improvement of flipped classroom teaching effectiveness.

5. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES OF FLIPPED CLASSROOM IN UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH READING TEACHING

5.1 Fragmented Micro Course Guide

In the pre class stage of flipped classroom, teachers rely on information technology teaching platforms to implement fragmented micro lesson guidance. Teachers combine the theme content, core vocabulary, long and difficult sentence structure, and logical structure of English reading texts to create short and concise micro lesson videos and supporting preview guides, which will advance basic and memorization reading knowledge to be completed before class. Students can independently watch micro lessons, complete pre reading tasks, grasp the general idea of the text, and independently record reading doubts and learning difficulties. This strategy effectively achieves knowledge pre transfer, saves classroom teaching time, creates conditions for in-depth exploration of reading texts during class, and fully conforms to the teaching philosophy of flipped classroom self-study.

5.2 Systematically design classroom teaching activities

Flipped classroom is a blended learning model where students can independently control their learning time, location, path, and progress. Staker et al. (2012) classified blended learning models into four categories: rotation mode, flexible mode, self mixing mode, and whole school virtual mode. In the internalization stage of flipped classroom classes, teachers adopt a problem oriented teaching approach based on the difficult questions that students have previewed before class. The classroom focuses on group collaboration and exploration, guiding students to discuss the main theme, structure, and writing characteristics of the text. Students present their findings and explore their viewpoints, while teachers provide targeted feedback and corrections. For narrative texts, teachers can create situational deduction activities to deepen students' understanding of the content and emotions of the text, effectively achieving the internalization of knowledge in the classroom. Teachers can use diverse classroom activities such as buzzer quizzes and group competitions to adapt to the learning needs of different students, activate the classroom, and stimulate students' enthusiasm for participation.

This type of fun teaching format can deepen students' understanding of the text, enhance their language application ability, and lay a solid foundation for subsequent learning.

5.3 Diversified Subject Evaluation

The multi subject evaluation strategy is mainly applied in the post class evaluation and analysis process of flipped classroom, and is an important means to improve the closed-loop of flipped classroom teaching. This strategy breaks the traditional single teacher summative evaluation model and integrates three evaluation methods: student self-evaluation, group peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation. It comprehensively and procedurally assesses students' pre class preparation quality, classroom reading exploration performance, and text comprehension level.

Through diversified evaluation, it is possible to objectively reflect students' true reading and learning status, and promptly identify their shortcomings in text comprehension, logical analysis, and self-directed learning. At the same time, the evaluation results can provide reverse guidance for teachers to optimize micro course resources and classroom task design, continuously improving the overall teaching effectiveness of undergraduate English reading flipped classroom.

6. CONCLUSION

The flipped classroom teaching model has broad application prospects in undergraduate English reading teaching. Through pre class self-study, classroom discussion and analysis, as well as post class evaluation and analysis, students' learning initiative can be improved and teaching effectiveness can be optimized. However, in order to achieve the ideal effect of flipped classroom teaching, teachers still need to address issues such as deep exploration time for reading classroom texts, teaching process design, and student learning evaluation. Therefore, teachers can adopt strategies such as fragmented micro lesson guidance, systematic design of classroom teaching activities, and divided subject evaluation to continuously optimize the flipped classroom teaching mode. At the same time, teachers need to keep up with the times, enhance their information technology literacy, improve classroom control, and create a more challenging and interactive English reading environment when applying flipped classroom teaching.

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