The Strategies of College English Teachers' Professional Development in the Network Era

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Abstract

With the advance of technology, higher education ushered in a new era. Micro-lecture, MOOCs and blended teaching are as the new form to be the overturn of the traditional classroom teaching. The thesis analyzes the relationship between micro-lecture and the flipped classroom, the change in the flipped classroom, the relationship among micro-lecture, MOOCs and blended teaching model in order to summarize the practical significance of blended teaching, which guides the professional development of the teachers.

Key words: Micro-lecture; MOOCs; Blended teaching; The flipped classroom

INTRODUCTION

In the Internet era, even though traditional college English teaching is regarded as an important teaching model, there is no denying that it is sometimes teacher-centered, time-consuming and dull. In the college English class, what teachers should pay more attention to be the effects of teaching and the students' feedback from the class. English, as a necessary and important subject, puts emphasis on listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teachers need to put their guidance into practice and add more interactions in the class in order to make students involved in the activities, which sometimes are combined with the technical methods and gain the encouraging achievement. With the advanced science and technology, the teaching models develop rapidly. These years, there are open coursewares, blended learning, flipped classroom, micro-lecture and MOOCs as the supplementary resources to the classroom teaching. Some teachers cannot realize the potential effects and the future trend of them. Therefore, they are so fearful that it will affect the knowledge and acceptance of the new technology. Different people hold different opinions on this. Some scholars think that the "new comers", such as flipped classroom, micro-lecture and MOOCs are just a nine-day wonder, which will not last long and cannot replace the face-to-face teaching, while others agree that they are the good ways to improve effective classroom teaching and advocate teachers to use them all the time. To some degree, they believe the new models are better than the traditional teaching model. For my part, it is a good way to combine the traditional model and the new models, that is to say, to carry out blended teaching.

1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MICRO-LECTURE AND FLIPPED CLASSROOM

Micro-lecture was first put forward by David Penrose, a senior teaching engineer, from San Juan College, New Mexico, USA in 2008. There are five procedures: List the teaching cores; write the introduction and summary about the teaching cores lasting 15 to 30 seconds and provide the context to the core concepts; record the video lasting 1 to 3 minutes; devise the assignments after class guiding students to read and explore the knowledge about courses; put the teaching video and the course assignments on the

course management system. Till now, with the advanced technology and the requirement of the contests, micro-lecture changes a little. According to the survey, it lasts a little longer, 15-20 minutes. There are many reasons for the popularity of micro-lecture. One the one hand, it is affected by development of informatization, including digital campus and the similarity of the courseware design, which encourages the involvement and enthusiasm of the teachers. On the other hand, with the spread of the mobile learning and popularity of the mobile Internet and mobile terminal, there is a change of gaining knowledge. Learners tend to use the small period of time to learn. Therefore, the fragmentation of learning emerges as the times require, that is, short period and high frequency in learning.

Micro-lecture is the technical design plan of the flipped classroom and it is also the organization form of the flipped classroom teaching. They have close relationship.

The flipped classroom teaching or inverted classroom teaching is based on the classroom face-to-face teaching. Different kinds of teaching organization forms are used to realize it. The flipped classroom teaching is the way to adjust the structure of teaching organization and the time of teaching assignment. It is also the method of transforming initiative from the teacher to students. Teachers don't take up classroom time to teach. Students learn the knowledge after class by themselves through micro-lecture, MOOCs, electronic books and so on and they can also discuss with students and look up some materials on the Internet. When students go back classroom teaching, they pay more attention to raising some questions to the teacher, discussion and communication and learning important and difficult knowledge points.

Such kind of organization form of teaching avoids consuming time in the classroom teaching. Thus, teachers have more time to communicate with the students individually, which promotes students to design and assign their own learning plans and contents. There is no doubt that students gain knowledge through practice, which is solid and reliable. And it is also an effective resource for the students who don't have the chance to take the courses and students can share the resource freely.

The aim of every kind of teaching mode is to arouse the interests of the students and supplement the class activities. Some of the MOOCs makers desert the long-time PPT designs and make short period teaching videos which usually last 8 to 15 minutes. It embodies the idea of "fragmentation study". Though the advanced technical tools and methods, it seems as if the students were on the spot. Teachers can also design some discussions or quizzes in the MOOCs in order to make class effective. And the flipped classroom usually solves the problems in the classroom after the students looking at the MOOCs. Specifically, MOOCs is the new form of the application of information technology in teaching.

2. CHANGES IN THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM

According to the survey in the foreign countries, in the traditional classroom teaching, there are 50% students failed in English, 44% in mathematics, while in the flipped classroom teaching, they decrease by 19% and 13%. (Tina, 2010) In the traditional classroom teaching, students preview the courses aimlessly and teacher cannot learn about how much the students study before the class. And teachers only teach the new knowledge, while students accept the knowledge passively. During this process, teachers completely ignore the mental state of students. After class, students encounter some language points which they don't understand and they cannot be answered timely. However, in the flipped classroom, teachers assign the task for the students to preview through the teaching designs ahead of time and recording the videos related to the classroom knowledge. Students can submit their questions they encounter during previewing and make teachers teach the lesson to the point and draw students' attention. After class, students can give the feedback to teachers through the Network platform, which forms a virtuous cycle. There are some changes in the flipped classroom. In the model of the flipped classroom, the ways of learning change. Students preview lessons through micro-lecture. The rhythm of learning is controlled by the students themselves. Where they don't understand, they can watch the videos repeatedly. At last, questions which they don't deal with can give the feedback to teachers. The model of the flipped classroom makes the student full of confidence. Students have more space to think and gain the recognition from their classmates and their confidence is built up gradually.

For teachers, the requirements for teachers' personal abilities are higher. And their teaching plans before the class have changed. The teaching designs should not only be limited to the design of contents of teaching. Teachers need to put the learning behaviors, learning process, learning psychology and learning feedback into the teaching design. The videos should be made on the basis of the criteria of the course and the level of the students. The role of teachers also changes in this process. In the traditional class, teachers often instill the knowledge into the students from the beginning to the end. The teaching model of the flipped classroom lets teachers get rid of the traditional model and there are discussion sections in it. Students can accept the teaching guidance individually, which can indeed grasp the learning psychology and the state of students.

College English teaching needs this new kind of teaching model. How to make the classroom English teaching more active and effective is a hot issue in college English teaching. The flipped classroom is the result of critical thinking to the college English teaching. The reform of college English teaching needs such kind

222

of change in the model of classroom organization. The flipped classroom realizes the main position of students in class and the large and informative capacity of classroom teaching.

3. THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG MICRO-LECTURE, MOOCS AND BLENDED TEACHING MOEL

Blended-teaching is a strategy that uses different learning theories, different technology, different methods and ways of application. It's the combination of face-to-face teaching, online teaching and after-class learning and practicing. It advocates that teachers put the advantages of teaching and digital teaching together in order to gain better teaching effects. They supplement one another. In this process, the cognition of students are improved. Students accept knowledge passively because of the single form of teaching, which cannot arouse the interests of them, while micro-lecture and MOOCs prevail because of the application of the new technology on the campus. Micro-lecture and MOOCs are made by short videos, which are equipped with large information. Although traditional teaching plays a crucial role in the teaching model, it isn't the only key to impart knowledge. Without pictures, sound and other specific materials, teaching is a dull activity to the students. Therefore, first of all, teachers need to be trained with the abilities of operating PPT or interactive tools. Second, get rid of the obstacles about the Internet environment so as to guarantee the teaching effects.

Micro-lecture and MOOCs are the forms of operating blended teaching model. They are the most commonly used ways of teaching. Though micro-lecture and MOOCs, teachers put important and difficult points into them, which last short time. After the video, teachers can assign the homework or task for students to finish after class, which saves a lot of time and lets students have things to do. The good teaching effects cannot separate from teachers' teaching and students' learning. Both of these two aspects are always considered by the teaching reformers. Some people argue that the time and places are flipped and the order of teaching and learning is not flipped. Learning depends on looking at the micro-lectures made by teachers. As a matter of fact, teachers teach the students first and then students learn, which is transformed to learn before class. This kind of learning doesn't realize autonomous and exploratory learning. They believe that micro-lecture, MOOCs and the flipped classroom may aggravate the students' extracurricular burden. If students only look at the videos in class and the teacher only look at the videos with students, who is only as a bystander. It is meaningless, which makes the classroom teaching tedious. However, some people support it, because it flips the order of teaching and learning. In the traditional classroom teaching, students are taught first and then they learn. Students study in class and do the assignments after class. However, in the flipped classroom, students first learn actively and then the teacher teaches them afterwards. Students study before class and they do some assignments in class, which let the position of teachers and students flipped. The center of the class changes from teachers to students. It is a kind of autonomous and exploratory learning and is beneficial to cultivate the creative ability of students.

Network teaching is the important basis of blended teaching. Appropriate network teaching can promote the multiple communications between the teacher and students so as to improve the understanding of students to the course contents and learning abilities and creativity. Because classroom time is limited, teachers sometimes cannot finish all the contents they want to teach. Therefore, students can finish their tasks by means of network platforms. In recent years, there are mutual assessments under the Internet environment. During this process, learning effects are improved. The online teaching through the network can strengthen the effect of face-to-face teaching, which goes hand in hand.

Blended teaching model cannot separate from micro-lecture and MOOCs. Only one form of teaching isn't suitable for the age of network. Although micro-lecture and MOOCs have their own strengths and weaknesses, we may use the good points to supplement the traditional face-to-face classroom teaching. Blended teaching is as a trend to be valued by more and more teachers, especially college English teachers. English teaching is different from other subjects. It focuses on listening, speaking, reading and writing. If teachers can give students vivid pictures and more materials to help students to understand the contents of lessons, it not only broadens students' horizon, but also enhances the classroom capacity.

4. PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF DESIGN THEORY IN BLENDED TEACHING

With the popularity of higher education, classroom teaching becomes more important and also faces the challenge, because the number of the students is expanded. The capacity of classes and groups is also becoming large. Thus, the classroom teaching that is based on traditional teaching mode1 is difficult to guarantee the teaching effect and efficiency. How to improve college English teaching to suit for large class is a hot issue faced by college manager and teachers. The course design for the blended teaching is to combine traditional classroom teaching with online teaching. This kind of teaching model can cope with some teaching difficulties. It can provide some expansive learning activities and more chances for feedbacks, help learners to finish some practical homework and promote the communication between groups and class in order to

solve the problems of the large capacity of classes and improve the learning methods. Blended teaching is the new development in the network era.

Blended teaching is also the need to promote students' cooperative learning outside class. With the increase of knowledge and requirements for the master of the knowledge, cooperative learning outside class plays a very important role. The design of blended teaching gives reasonable respond. In traditional classroom teaching, teachers only teach face to face. There is no connection between teachers and students outside class, which isn't beneficial to the teaching and learning and limits the cooperative learning outside class. However, blended teaching builds up a bridge for teachers and students through convenient ways of communication. Blended teaching can be divided into some parts: teaching in order to guide learning, communication in class face to face, discussion according to the topic of the course, exercises so as to check the students' learning level and the tasks which students can finish through cooperative learning outside class.

Blended teaching is also the need for developing students' professional techniques. Nowadays, the basic knowledge cannot meet the need for the development of the society and professional techniques have been valued much. Therefore, how to cultivate the professional techniques is the new question for the education research. And it is the theory of blended teaching that is summarized from the practical exploration. In the meanwhile, the higher education should also cultivate the practical techniques for their future jobs, which the basic knowledge cannot compare with. Under the environment of the competition in the market, only by this way can students occupy an important place. Blended teaching is the way to cultivate the students who are equipped with competitive professional techniques.

CONCLUSION

Education Informatization Development Plan for Ten Years points out education informatization is based on the innovation of education ideas (2011-2020) and depends on the education resources of high quality and the environmental construction of informatization learning. (Ministry of Education, 2011) The flipped classroom teaching is an innovative teaching model, which overturns the traditional teaching model. The flipped classroom teaching cannot separate from micro-lecture teaching and blended teaching. As the teachers in the network era, teaching reforms should be done and we should not just stop at the stage of theoretical research, but put it into teaching practice in order to make a greater contribution to modern education reforms.

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