A Study on the Intelligent Teaching of College English Based on the Rain Classroom

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Abstract: Rain Classroom was the wisdom teaching tools launched by Tsinghua University in the context of mobile. Combining with the practice of College English teaching, this paper expounds the situation and problems of Rain Classroom teaching before class, in class and after class, and explores the intelligent teaching mode of College English based on mobile internet.

Introduction

With the rapid popularization of intelligent terminals and 4G networks, teaching based on mobile internet has opened a new door for the informatized teaching and is also one of the trends of educational informatization in the future. However, in the process of teaching aided by the mobile phone also has some problems. For instance, although some established learning groups, with the use of Tencent QQ, WeChat, e-mail, etc. can realize the communication before and after class, some problems exist in resource sharing, effective supervision, and instant feedback. In addition, teachers cannot judge whether students have downloaded and learned related learning resources before class uploaded teachers. Moreover, due to limited platform storage time, it is difficult to ensure that all information is downloaded at any time. WeChat or Tencent and other platforms used in teaching activities cannot be combined on a platform, which is not convenient for teachers and students, and cannot achieve instant and efficient feedback. The whole teaching process is chaotic, and it also affects the enthusiasm of interaction between teachers and students.

Based on the mobile internet, the intelligent teaching tool—the Rain Classroom, integrating complex information technology into PowerPoint and WeChat, solves the problems in teaching assisted by mobile phones. The author tries to improve the teaching effect and improve the teaching quality by combining the Rain Classroom with the teaching practice of Comprehensive English course, and explores the best intelligent teaching mode assisted by mobile phones.

I. The Characteristics of the Rain Classroom

The Rain Classroom is a new intelligent teaching tool developed by online education office of Tsinghua University. With Powerpoint and WeChat, we can achieve full interaction and resource sharing between teachers and students before class, in class and after class. Teachers can not only send the previewing materials with MOOC, videos or exercises to the students, but also teachers can communicate with students easily and get timely feedbacks, which makes teacher-student interaction more and more convenient provides great convenience for the intelligent teaching reform.

As a new tool for intelligent teaching, the Rain Classroom has prominent characteristics. First of all, it has the characteristics of convenience. As long as teachers know the use of Powerpoint and WeChat, it can be used directly, which is convenient for both teachers and students. Secondly, it has the characteristics of individualization. The design of interactive modules allows teachers to
understand the students' learning situation. For example, if students don’t understand the content in the class, they can click the button "don't understand" immediately, and the teacher will receive the information and know which student has trouble in learning. Finally, it has the characteristics of data analysis. The Rain Classroom can achieve full-cycle data acquisition. Through big data analysis, we can understand students’ learning behaviors, and teachers can grasp the learning situation of students in classes and after classes.

II. The Practice of College English Teaching Based on the Rain Classroom

The use of the Rain Classroom to carry out the teaching of College English course has changed the traditional teaching mode, and has realized the seamless connection between online and offline learning resources before class, in class, after class.

2.1 Before Class

Before class, teachers create virtual classes through the Rain Classroom, invite students to join classes through invitation codes, and students can become a class member, then they can see teachers' pre-released learning resources, such as preview courseware, exercises, self-test and other teaching materials. For example, in writer's class some students are weak in English sentence types. Therefore, the related courseware is finished in advance and is published in the Rain Classroom platform, aiming to urge students to do self-study before class, and remind students who haven't finished previewing based on the statistics data from the platform. As is shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2, after publishing information on the platform, we not only made statistics on the number of learners, but also made a clear list of the students who had completed the study, which is an effective supervision for students' autonomous learning. In addition, platforms can also link MOOC and website video resources, such as Chinese University MOOC, etc.. Rich teaching resources also greatly improve students' interest in learning English.

2.2 In Class

In the actual classroom teaching, through the "sign" button in the Rain Classroom, the attendance of the students can be conveniently known, and the teaching time is effectively saved. The interactive function in the Rain Classroom will help the teachers to know the students' learning state at any time, and raise students' interest. For example, in teaching one article about graduates, with the help of the Rain Classroom, a discussion topic "What do you really want to do two years later?" was put forward. Soon, students expressed their own ideas in the form of a barrage of "Continue studying; Find a stable job; Be a housewife..." the atmosphere was extremely active. Meanwhile, when one learning point has been shown, a series of questions can be set, and then students’ answers and the statistical results will be shown in teachers’ mobile phones. If there is a higher proportion of wrong answers, teachers can be aware of problems in teaching. In addition, teachers can also symbolically use the function of red packets to encourage excellent students.

In the course of English teaching, teachers can also use the function of releasing test papers in the Rain Classroom. On the one hand, it can be used for students' autonomous learning assessment, supervise students' autonomous learning, and teachers can find out problems in time by relevant data statistics, so as to determine the emphasis of classroom teaching. On the other hand, a test paper can be published after the end of the lecture to test the students' learning effect in class. For instance, in the beginning of the new term, in order to have a clearer understanding of students' English level and vocabulary size, the author used the Rain Classroom platform to carry out a time-limited vocabulary test. After submitting papers, students can immediately check the score, the accuracy and which ones are wrong, and even check answers. This way only can help students understand the knowledge, but also deepen learning. For example, Figure 3 shows students’ score ranking; Figure 4 is a reflection of all the students' learning situation; Figure 5 shows the accuracy of all questions; Figure 6 is a display to check answers with the platform.
2.3 After Class

After class, teachers can also share other learning resources, and students can use the feedback from the Rain Classroom to follow up as well. The use of the Rain Classroom in College English teaching can be unified, coordinated and interacted before class, in class and after class, so as to greatly improve the teaching effect.

III. The Advantages and Problems in College English Teaching Based on the Rain Classroom

With the help of intelligent teaching tools like the Rain Classroom, teachers’ teaching mode and students’ learning experience have been changed dramatically. The test function is very practical, which can avoid the possibility of students cheating, and meanwhile students can be able to get timely feedback after submitting the papers. Besides, the powerful function of data statistics not only greatly reduces teachers’ labor, but also help teachers come to know students’ learning situation at any time. The sharing of learning resources is more convenient. The content of teachers’ lectures can be learnt for several times. When teachers release learning resources in the Rain Classroom, students can learn them anytime. Teachers can also check the students’ learning situation.

Although the Rain Classroom is an advanced teaching tool, there are also some problems in the application. For example, network instability causes the interface to be hard to open. Due to network reasons, students’ personal cell phone causes such problems as weak signal, slow interface opening, and even incomplete information. Especially when carrying out in-class test, some students fail to enter the question bank in time, resulting in a relatively delayed answer. In addition, there is no preview mode of student interface in the Rain Classroom test. There is only a preview showing the answers, which cannot simulate the process of students’ submission. Audio and video resources are currently only supporting website links, which is limited and cumbersome.

Summary

In a word, the Rain Classroom integrates the complex information technology into the PPT and WeChat. Through the virtual classroom, it builds the interactive college learning environment to ensure the effective interaction of the classroom teaching, so as to improve the students' self-learning ability and satisfy students' personal needs. It is an inevitable trend of teaching reform to make use of the Rain Classroom and other intelligent teaching tools to carry out college English teaching. With the progress of science and technology, the auxiliary teaching function of intelligent teaching tools such as the rain class will be gradually improved as well, and will become a powerful tool for College English teaching.

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