

Teaching Practice of Mobile Assisted Language Learning in College English Courses

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Abstract: Mobile assisted language learning provides English learners with a more convenient, personalized, rich and autonomous learning experience, which helps to improve the learning effect and efficiency. Mobile assisted English learning should determine the learning theme and content according to learners' needs and interests, and carry out teaching design based on real language materials. Mobile assisted language learning can be applied well in teaching English vocabulary, listening, reading and translation. The application of mobile assisted language learning in college English teaching requires English teachers to improve information literacy, improve ability of applying technology, and give full play to the advantages of information technology to improve the effect of online and offline blended teaching.

Keywords: mobile assisted language learning; college English courses; applications

With the popularity of mobile networks, mobile applications have become a mainstream tool for language learning as a convenient way to access resources and online learning. The mobile terminal supported by new technologies such as streaming media and artificial intelligence has quickly replaced the traditional learning resource distribution method. Most of the publications of the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press have been converted to online audio-visual services instead of CDs. The popularity of mobile devices and wireless networks has made mobile language learning possible, which is a branch of mobile learning. Mobile learning can be considered as the next generation of e-learning. The characteristics of mobile learning are spontaneity, informality, personalization, and ubiquitous penetration. Mobile devices mainly include electronic readers, smartphones, and personal computers, among which smartphones are more suitable for mobile learning due to their portability and popularity. Mobile devices are not a substitute for existing learning devices, but rather a new way to equip learners with new learning capabilities in a new environment. College students are the generation of digital native, and smartphones have become an essential part of their lives, which provides the conditions for mobile learning to occur.^[1] It should be noted that mobile learning is not equivalent to fragmented learning, and mobile language learning requires continuity and systematicness.

1 Advantages of mobile assisted language learning for English learning

Mobile learning refers to the learning of learners in non-fixed and non-preset positions, or the learning of effective use of mobile technology.^[2] Mobile assisted language learning (MALL) is a branch of mobile learning, which is different from computer assisted foreign language teaching (CALL) because it uses personalized and mobile devices such as mobile phones and tablets to carry out learning activities.^[3]

Mobile assisted language learning is advantageous in teaching English to college students.

1.1 Flexible learning methods

Using smartphones for mobile assisted language learning can transform the learning mode from a teacher-centered model to a student-centered model, which is beneficial for cultivating students' autonomous learning abilities. Smartphones are often equipped with social networking software, which develops social interaction between individuals. **Social interaction among learners may help improve learners' confidence in English learning and thus to empower learning effectiveness.**^[4] to achieve communicative goals. Learning English through mobile devices allows for the exchange of learning data with other learners, enabling collaborative learning. Collaborative learning helps learners support, motivate, and evaluate each other to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

1.2 Updated learning resources

Reading activities require a large amount of input, and the articles in the textbooks cannot meet the of learners' needs for reading. However, a large number of articles that learners read using mobile terminals can be an effective supplement to in-class reading. Students can also choose suitable materials based on their personal attitudes and collect materials for thematic discussions. Due to the access of wireless networks, the content in mobile applications can be updated in real time, allowing users to learn English while also keeping up with current events. Compared to traditional paper-based learning resources that are not updated in a timely manner, mobile assisted language learning resources are more timely and fashionable, better meeting the learning needs of young people.

1.3 Individualized learning needs

Learning resources with rich content and diverse forms based on the same theme can meet the individualized learning needs of students. Taking WeLearn applications, a self-directed learning platform for college English reading, as an example, there are multiple detailed learning resources on the theme of "environment" in "Video Resources" section, including renewable resources, wildlife protection, climate change, carbon cycle, etc. The same theme is also present in the "Audio Resources" section, including wildlife, population and climate, marine pollution, and global temperature change. In the "Micro-lecture Resources" section, you can find English expressions related to the environment and expository essays of cause-and-effect relationship in the writing of ecological protection theme. Students can engage in in-depth learning on a specific topic from both visual and auditory perspectives, and can also engage in specialized learning on various skills in English learning, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

1.4 Mobile learning community

Learners can more easily exchange reading materials and exchange ideas with their peers through mobile application software, and can increase interaction in learning through sharing and collaboration to solve problems. Building a learning community can help enhance students' mobile assisted language learning experience. The learning community can create a good interactive environment and establish a positive English learning atmosphere.^[5] The good emotional experience of learners can stimulate their creative thinking.

2 Principles of mobile assisted language learning in college English teaching

2.1 Content based instruction

Content-based instruction (CBI) is a language teaching method based on subject or theme content. It integrates the language system and content, takes learners' needs as the premise and basis, studies subject knowledge and uses the target language for teaching, so as to achieve the goal of enabling learners to acquire language ability. The CBI concept has four elements, namely, the theme teaching mode, authentic learning materials, imparting subject knowledge, and meeting the needs of students. The CBI theme model integrates language knowledge, subject knowledge and learning and cultivation of learners' critical thinking. Second language acquisition theory, cognitive learning theory and communicative approach theory are the basis of CBI. With the concept of CBI, learners learn subject content on the one hand, and develop language skills on the other. With this concept, language learning and subject learning are organically combined. English learning is no longer simply to master language skills, but to master the language through subject content learning. CBI concept can effectively solve the problem of students' lack of motivation. Content based English learning, which carries subject knowledge, makes students' learning goals clearer, learning efficiency higher, and can also realize the transformation from general English to academic English or professional English faster. Whether it is academic English or professional English, CBI is an effective model for the transformation from EGP to ESP. The core of ESP teaching based on the concept of CBI is to promote the learning of English skills through the input of meaningful learning materials, so as to improve the learners' ability to communicate in English.

2.2 Needs analysis

Teachers should understand what students need to learn and how to learn effectively through needs analysis, which mainly analyzes target students' learning needs. Only by fully understanding the target situation and students' needs, teachers can choose appropriate teaching material and teaching methods. Needs analysis is the premise of teaching. English teaching should be carried out according to learners' learning objectives and specific needs. ESP is student-centered. It determines teaching objectives and selects teaching materials according to learners' needs. By accurately diagnosing students' learning needs, creating learning situations, reforming college English teaching content, and focusing on cultivating students' professional ability, students' ability of using English can be improved. Taking art major students as an example, art major students show little interest in English learning. In order to improve the effectiveness of College English teaching, teachers investigate the English learning needs of art major students. According to the analysis of the survey results, students generally believe that English learning is not helpful for their future employment, and they seldom use English in their employment. To this end, teachers need to adjust the curriculum. It is advisable that for art majors, after completing a year of general English program, an English course on art design is offered. Students' needs analysis of learning English makes teachers understand students' learning difficulty, and adjust teaching in time.

3 Practice of mobile assisted language teaching in college English courses

Mobile assisted language learning can occur in the classroom or outside the classroom, but it is more useful for learning activities outside the classroom. Extracurricular mobile English learning makes language learning more directly related to real world experience. In addition, the advantages of mobile

learning can be better reflected through mobile learning after class, which can make the most of learners' free time. Teaching of college English based on mobile terminal can occur in all aspects of English learning, especially vocabulary, listening, reading and translation.

3.1 Teaching vocabulary through mobile assisted language learning

Teaching English vocabulary through mobile assisted language learning can be divided into three phrases, respectively, before class, during class and after class. Teachers provide learners with example sentences and picture annotations of English vocabulary through vocabulary learning application, and students fully preview the vocabulary to be learned before class. Learning vocabulary through learners' mobile devices can make better use of multimodal tools to understand new words. Teachers provide individualized vocabulary activities in class. After vocabulary practice, teachers design online vocabulary test to ensure the effect of vocabulary teaching. Students' answers are scored, recorded and fed back to the teacher. Teachers can get real-time feedback on the result of the test, so as to have a understanding of which vocabulary students have better mastery and which vocabulary need to be consolidated. After class, students complete extended vocabulary exercise through the mobile application, and do English-Chinese translation with the learned vocabulary, so as to use the vocabulary contextually and properly. Mobile assisted vocabulary learning allows low-level English learners to learn vocabulary through audio and visual aids.

3.2 Teaching English Listening through mobile assisted language learning

Listening to English every day on English application makes listening a habit, which makes learners familiar with English pronunciation and creates a ubiquitous English listening environment for learners. In order to make learners have a real understanding of listening material, they have to go through a process of intensive listening. Using the English listening application installed in smart phone, learners can listen to multimedia audio online from mobile devices, register learning websites, and sign up for mobile learning courses. On the one hand, the mobile application of English listening in smart phones enables English listening to be carried out at any time. Listening material will be updated in time with a wide range of topics, so that learners can have a wide selection of choices according to their theme preferences, so as to maintain the motivation of continuous listening learning. On the other hand, these mobile applications for English listening have scripts matched with audio, which can enable students to understand the meaning of listening materials while correcting pronunciation. Most English listening mobile applications also design oral practice corresponding to the listening sources, and give feedback on learners' oral performance according to the criteria of English speaking test. Combining with the feedback of teachers, listening and speaking can complement each other and make synchronous progress. Taking the mobile application of "Love English listening" as an example, learners can see the corresponding text while listening to the audio. In addition, learners can choose dictation training, and choose the interval between sentences during dictation training. Learners can adjust their listening speed in time according to their learning ability. "Love English listening" has the function of "reading aloud", which can score students' reading, so that learners can improve their pronunciation. After listening training, learners can carry out listening tests on mobile applications to examine their learning outcome.

3.3 Teaching reading through mobile assisted language learning

Teachers publish theme-based passages on mobile terminal, including video and audio resources

supporting the text, so that students can not only read the text, but also use videos to assist their understanding of the passages, listen to audio to practice listening, and mobilize a variety of senses to participate in language learning. Students are increasingly exposed to English learning through a wider range of English reading materials, and they learn to extract information from a long text and improve the ability to make a summary in the process, which in itself is the improvement of English reading skills.

Taking the English learning application Welearn as an example. The application provides a wealth of in-class and extracurricular resources, including not only the electronic version of the resources corresponding to the teaching materials, but also video materials, audio materials and micro-lectures, so as to enrich learners' extracurricular learning. Specifically, in the warm-up activities of each unit, there are listening activities or listening to songs. Learners can learn repeatedly after class at any time without waiting for the teacher to play it uniformly in class, which not only liberates the role of the teacher as a player, but also enables learners to learn flexibly according to their learning needs. In addition, learners can read the text and record their reading by themselves. After recording, they will receive feedback on which words are not accurately pronounced. Moreover, the text is segmented by sentences, which is very conducive to intensive reading and refinement. The program provides bilingual reading resources and marks the difficulty of the article. Learners can choose suitable articles according to the type of article (short stories, popular science expository texts, biographies, essays, literary and artistic theories, speeches, etc.) and topics (more than 20 fields such as psychology, nature, health, culture, literature, education, art, etc.) and difficulty (extremely difficult, fairly difficult, not so difficult, easy, etc.) to truly realize personalized reading. The articles are marked with key words and difficult words. Articles with a variety of themes can enable students to find the content they are interested in. In addition, multimedia resources with the same theme can also be found through keyword search in audio resource library, video resource library and micro-lecture resource library. The form of audio-visual combination is more suitable for students' learning style. It is necessary to mention that no matter how good the learning resources are, they are more effective for learners with strong motivation. If learners are not fully motivated, then an external evaluation system is needed to promote learning.

3.4 Teaching translation through mobile assisted language learning

Mobile assisted language learning can also be used to learn English translation skills. Teachers use mobile applications to publish Chinese sentences, and learners write English translations. Students practice translation strategies and skills learned in class. Sentences for translation on the application are classified according to translation skills, including domestication, foreignization, omission, conversion, virtualization and amplification. Learners can combine translation theory with translation practice through abundant corpus.

Mobile assisted language learning provides a richer form of English teaching and learning for both teachers and learners. English teachers should improve information literacy and design a better mobile learning plan. Learners should also give full play to the convenience of mobile applications to effectively serve English learning.

4 Enlightenment of mobile assisted language learning in college English teaching

4.1 Improve teachers' information literacy

Teachers should develop five aspects of literacy, namely, education literacy, subject literacy, teaching literacy, scientific research literacy and information literacy. English teachers' professional abilities include teaching design ability, ability of implementing teaching strategy, modern educational technology application ability, teaching reflection and reform ability, teaching and scientific research ability, practical ability, evaluation and testing ability. English teachers in college should not only have solid language skills, but also have the ability to integrate language and subject teaching as well as using modern information technology. College English teachers' information literacy is of great significance in today's digital and information age. Firstly, information literacy enables English teachers to obtain the latest teaching resources and research results more effectively. They can search through the Internet for a wealth of English teaching materials, including various textbooks, courseware, teaching videos, etc., so as to enrich the teaching content and improve the teaching quality. Secondly, good information literacy helps teachers carry out online teaching and blended teaching. **Teachers' perceived usefulness of mobile technology is a vital intermediate factor in effective use of mobile assisted language learning.**^[6] **Teachers with mobile learning awareness** can skillfully use the online teaching platform to effectively interact and communicate with students and expand the space-time scope of teaching. Moreover, information literacy can help teachers better understand students' learning needs and learning conditions. Through data analysis and other means, teachers can accurately grasp students' learning progress and existing problems, so as to provide more targeted guidance and guidance. In addition, English teachers with high information literacy can also participate in academic exchanges and cooperation in the field of education. They can share experiences and opinions with their counterparts at home and abroad on the Internet to jointly promote the development of English teaching. Information literacy is the key ability for college English teachers to improve teaching effect, promote their professional development and adapt to the trend of educational informatization.

4.2 Develop personalized learning programs

In the context of big data, students' learning needs analysis can be completed quickly, comprehensively and efficiently. Learners' learning styles and personality can help teachers more accurately locate learning objectives and learning content. Accordingly, teaching English via applications should fully encourage personalized learning methods to meet the diverse learning needs of students. Relying on the intelligent learning platform, cloud classroom and other media, the English course is customized, allowing students to choose their own learning methods. Students have a chance to carry out cooperative learning and inquiry learning in the course, and enable themselves to achieve their learning goals in the deep interaction with teachers and peers through the problem oriented teaching design.

4.3 Effective online and offline teaching of English listening and Speaking

The teaching of college English listening and speaking course based on blended learning does not completely leave the learning to students. On the contrary, teachers must put more energy into guiding students how to carry out English listening and speaking learning. MOOC platform provides students with a large number of English listening and speaking learning resources. But how to find the course content that students really need from the complex resources and how to correctly use learning strategies to achieve autonomous learning must be effectively guided by teachers. Without proper guidance, blended learning will lose the role of teachers as guides, and also cut off the relationship between teachers

and students. Blended teaching poses a greater challenge to teachers' teaching skills, and teachers' teaching design is the key to the success of blended teaching. In addition to better teaching design, teachers should also pay attention to humanistic care, so that students can also feel the role of teachers during online learning. Teachers should not only stimulate students' internal motivation, but also adhere to timely learning feedback, implement evaluation mechanism, and enhance students' motivation with external constraints. For example, teachers require students to record the main content of MOOC learning in the form of learning notes. The teacher gives the key points of this MOOC course, and the students supplement the details according to the key points of the course given by the teacher. On the one hand, it avoids the blindness of learning and clarifies the key points of learning. On the other hand, under the guidance of teachers, carefully designed lessons urge students to actively use learning strategies. Online teaching and offline teaching cannot be separated. Online teaching and offline teaching form a complete closed loop, including teaching objectives, teaching content, teaching organization and teaching evaluation. While completing their respective teaching objectives, online teaching and offline teaching are effectively connected to achieve online learning preparation, offline teacher and students interaction, and online and offline mixed teaching mode learning evaluation.

Conclusion

Compared with traditional way of learning English, mobile assisted language learning has significant advantages, including convenience and flexibility, personalized customization, instant feedback, rich multimedia resources, strong social interaction, timely updates, and stimulating autonomous learning. Mobile assisted English learning should use the characteristics of mobile devices to send personalized learning reminders and tasks, and adjust the learning content and difficulty according to the learners' progress and performance. In addition, an interactive communication platform should be created so that learners can share learning experiences, discuss problems, and promote the practical use of language. In terms of vocabulary teaching, vocabulary learning applications help learners deepen their understanding and memory of words through pictures, example sentences, memory games and other ways. In terms of listening teaching, learners can adjust the playback speed of listening materials according to their own level on English listening learning applications. In terms of teaching English reading, online reading platform provides a large number of English articles, covering various genres and topics. Besides, appropriate reading materials can be recommended according to learners' vocabulary and reading level. In terms of teaching translation, learners can compare their own translation with the results given by the software, analyze the differences, and learn translation skills. In a summary, mobile assisted English learning has brought great convenience and rich resources to the teaching of English vocabulary, listening, reading and translation, which helps to improve learners' learning effect and autonomous learning ability. College English teachers should improve their information literacy, design reasonable online and offline blended teaching processes and teaching contents, enhance personalized and autonomous learning, and enable students to achieve the optimization of English learning through cooperation and communication.

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