

The Application of Task-based Teaching Method in College English Teaching



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Abstract: The main purpose of a university English course is to develop student's English language skills. However, in the traditional English teaching mode, the teacher is the centre of teaching, and it is difficult for students to participate in classroom activities. And the phenomenon of over-emphasis on English reading materials in the teaching process leads to limitations in students' understanding of the content of English texts, which not only affects the quality of university English courses but also affects students' reading speed. This paper focuses on the task-based teaching method and discusses its specific application in university English teaching.

Keywords: task-based teaching method; university English teaching; application

Compared with traditional teaching methods, the task-based teaching method, which focuses more on cultivating students' application skills, emphasizes that students are driven by real-life tasks to complete learning tasks, thereby achieving the purpose of learning knowledge. The natural learning process of the task-based approach coincides with the teaching requirements of university English courses. Therefore, the implementation of the task-based approach in the university English course will not only innovate the university English course but also develop students' English language skills.

1. Overview of the task-based teaching method

1.1 The concept of task-based teaching

The task-based approach was first introduced in the 1980s to enable students to learn a language through the use of language tasks. As the name implies, task-based teaching focuses on the organisation of tasks, in which students work on their cognitive skills through communication, cooperation or experience. The task-based approach mobilises one's knowledge base of English and enables one to

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understand and practically apply new knowledge. Compared to traditional methods, task-based teaching methods are more useful and effective in university English courses (Zheng, 2022).

The task-based teaching method is usually divided into three stages in the teaching process, each of which has a different task and requires students to complete the tasks they need to complete at different stages to effectively improve the quality of their learning. The task-based teaching mode can be divided into three stages, namely the pre-task stage, the task implementation stage and the post-task stage: the pre-task stage mainly consists of the teacher assigning learning tasks or practical ideas to students, for example, asking students to consult the information about the relevant people or things that appear in the lesson in advance, or directly introducing background knowledge related to the lesson in class, using pictures, videos and music and other multimedia resources to stimulate students. The task implementation stage is the core stage of the task-based teaching method, in which the teacher gives students different tasks to learn, to enhance students' initiative and motivation. In the post-task stage, the teacher arranges post-lesson exercises for

students to review the content of the stage, to achieve the purpose of learning new things by revising the old ones (Wen, 2022).

2. The current situation of English teaching at the university

2.1 Weaknesses and differences in students' English foundation

Some students can easily understand English words and grammar, while others have a weak English foundation and do not understand English knowledge well, resulting in a lack of words or poor English expression. The English course is different from the language course in that it is a foreign language subject and to be proficient in English requires students to be motivated in their approach to the English course and to be willing to tackle every problem they encounter. If there is a lack of interest in the English course, it is easy to feel overwhelmed in the process of learning English knowledge, and in serious cases, it may even cause students to doubt themselves and believe that they are lagging behind others. This situation undermines students' self-confidence, reduces their motivation to learn, and can even make them bored with learning.

2.2 Some teachers' teaching methods are old-fashioned

The single and outdated teaching method of English at university is also one of the main reasons that affect the quality of students' learning. The single teaching method can reduce students' interest in learning English courses to a certain extent. In addition, some university teachers in some areas still use the traditional fill-in-the-blank teaching method and do not incorporate new teaching ideas and methods into the university classroom, which results in some students having little interest in learning English. Some university English teachers are still at the early stage of teaching and answering questions, and the content of learning is mainly based on lectures and post-lesson exercises, which do not allow the teacher to play a guiding role and do not emphasise the students' main role (Hu, 2022).

According to the data, the task-based teaching method is a good fit for university English teaching, and its characteristics meet the practical requirements of English teaching, so it is feasible to integrate it into university English teaching. It is important to note that English teachers need to adapt their teaching methods and teaching modes to the students' characteristics and real-time changes in the classroom to improve the quality and efficiency of English learning.

3. Principles of task-based teaching and learning design

3.1 Emphasis on the student as the main subject in the classroom

The task-based teaching method is characterised by a focus on the learning task, with the student as the main subject of learning and the teacher as the classroom leader. All teaching activities need to revolve around the teaching task, both in the organisation and implementation of classroom teaching and in the selection of teaching content. The prerequisite for designing tasks is to give full play to the students' learning initiative and to improve their language learning and application skills by creating authentic language environments for them, which fully emphasise their status as the main subject in the classroom. It is also important to remember that in the process of designing tasks, different contexts should be created for students to develop their understanding of English knowledge (Wang, 2022).

3.2 Emphasis on "cooperative learning and resource sharing"

The task-based teaching method involves grouping individuals into teaching teams, which can be made up of two or more people, to work together to complete the learning tasks given by the teacher. The implementation of the task will promote communication between students, and those who are more capable of learning and understanding can lead the weaker students to learn together. Group members have different educational experiences and have different perceptions of English knowledge and understanding of things. By communicating with

each other, the group members can improve their perception of knowledge to the best possible level. This is a form of collaborative learning in which students share their understanding of knowledge and gradually develop a sharing of knowledge resources and learning thinking within the group. By comparing and contrasting the English priorities that different students have planned for themselves, the learning tasks can be implemented perfectly to the maximum extent possible and students' collaborative spirit and communication skills can be developed.

3.3 Emphasis on the construction of the learning environment

The construction of a good learning environment is fundamental to effective language learning, and both the tasks and activities need to be carried out in a good learning environment to function at their best. To build a good learning environment, it is necessary to choose good language materials, as authentic and relevant as possible, and to provide students with a learning environment in which they can communicate, learn cooperatively and share resources. It is important to put students at the centre of the classroom and to enhance the learning environment (Chen, 2022).

4. Steps for implementing the task-based approach in university English teaching

In the process of applying the task-based teaching method to university English teaching, students should be the main teaching and learning subjects, so that they can fully engage in the learning process, fully explore the media contained in English, enjoy the fun and benefits brought to them by English knowledge, and ensure that they are in a positive state of engagement in their university English courses. The three stages of the task-based approach are interspersed to form a top-down model of knowledge and understanding, and students can use schema theory to solve problems that arise during the reading of texts and to solve tasks in the reading process that do not enhance their English application skills. The following paper uses Charlie Chaplin as

an example to analyse the task-based approach (Li, 2022).

4.1 Pre-task stage task setting

The pre-task stage is the introduction stage, the main purpose of which is to stimulate students' interest in learning the English course and to exercise and inspire their thinking. In the initial stage of the course, teachers can set some tasks for students. Have students research and summarise information about Chaplin through the internet and other means, firstly to stimulate students' interest in learning in this way. The teacher can also set questions for students to discuss in groups and summarise the results for presentation on stage. By preparing for this stage, students can increase their confidence in learning, take the initiative to express their views, and bring the classroom atmosphere to a better and more active state.

In the pre-task stage, students can be given a compound dictation task for high-level students, for example asking them: What do you think is the influence of Chaplin's childhood on his later life and art? (What do you think is the influence of Chaplin's childhood on his later life and art?) The teacher can combine some of the words from Grades 4 and 6 into sentences and practise students' English word dictation skills by using this compound dictation. When students hear the questions posed by the teacher, they can find information to answer on their own, which is conducive to the subsequent teaching of English content (Zhang, 2021).

4.2 Implementation of the task implementation stage

In the task implementation stage, the teacher needs to explain the text in detail, abandoning the traditional way of translating words and sentences and analysing the keywords, the structure of words and sentences and the structure of the text. For example, the teacher could start by explaining the main idea of the text to the students and ask them to dig into the question: When was Charlie Chaplin's first film made? The purpose of this is to make the task less difficult so that students can solve the problem on their own. The teacher can then use key

vocabulary from the text to dig in the blanks and ask the students to fill in the answers. Doing this not only does it improve students' understanding of the text, but also hones their self-problem-solving skills. Through the teacher's guidance, students can grasp the key points of the English text more quickly, with the teacher playing a supervisory and guiding role in the process (Shi, 2020).

4.3 Post-task stage

The main purpose of the post-task stage in a university English course is to help students consolidate and review their knowledge, extend their knowledge from books to society and exercise their language application skills. Teachers can set up a collection of core vocabulary stories, where words are put together and eventually become a story. This method not only deepens students' memory of core vocabulary but also hones their English writing skills. For example, teachers can ask students to write a small essay based on the writing pattern of the text, entitled Famous people shoulder more responsibilities, and in this way, they can give students a comprehensive exercise in the four aspects of listening, reading, writing and writing, forming secondary learning in the process of writing and deepening their knowledge of English. This way, the four areas of listening, reading, writing and writing can be practised comprehensively.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the application of task-based teaching methods in university application teaching can not only effectively stimulate students' interest in learning English courses, but also bring into play students' subjective motivation. Students' potential in English can be fully explored and their problem-solving skills can be developed. In a task-based approach, students can work in groups to improve their knowledge base and enhance their language communication skills.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to this work.

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