

The Study on English Writing Teaching in Senior High School Based on Mind Mapping

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Abstract: Writing, as one of the four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), plays an important role in communication and receives more and more attention. Due to the long duration, the low efficiency of cultivating students' writing ability, and the difficulty of teaching writing practice, students are not interested in writing and find it difficult to improve their writing scores. However, Mind Mapping is a thinking tool of visibility and divergence invented according to the radioactive characteristics of the brain. Mind Mapping can present complex things in a concise and clear way, making the learning content logical and clear. Under the guidance of the constructivism and radiant thinking, by literature analysis, questionnaire, and interview, based on Mind Mapping, this paper first analyzes the main problems and causes of English writing teaching in senior high school, and then focuses on the application and effectiveness of Mind Mapping in English writing teaching. At last, aiming to improving the senior high school English writing teaching, the paper put forward some effective suggestions.

Keywords: Mind Mapping; English writing; Senior high school English teaching

1 Introduction

Writing skills is very significant in English learning. Writing is one of the most important manifestations of language ability and an important means of language expression and output. Writing ability reflects the comprehensive ability of students in terms of vocabulary, sentence structures, language expressions and organizations of texts. Furthermore, English writing can not only improve students' skills in listening, speaking, reading and viewing, but also helps them develop their logical thinking skills and problem analysis skills. However, the current situation of students' English writing level and their attitudes towards English writing cannot meet these requirements. Therefore, both the teachers and students need to find more effective ways to improve their writing skills. In this case, this paper is aimed to explore more effective English writing teaching methods to help improve students' writing ability and writing skills^[1].

English Curriculum Standards (2007) requires students to be able to write coherent and well-organized essays, describe things, express opinions and attitudes, write abstracts based on the text, implement stylistic norms and statements based on the information provided by the style, and write essays or reports and diagrams. Therefore, writing is the most important part of high school English learning.

The paper aims to test the effectiveness of mind mapping in senior high school English writing teaching. The ultimate goal of this research is to help students find more effective writing methods through the flexible use of mind mapping. Teachers use mind mapping to assist writing teaching, guide the students to learn to write using mind mapping, in order to improve students' English writing skills more quickly. The research can provide some reference for teachers and researchers. This research investigated the application effect of Mind Mapping in senior high school English writing teaching^[2]. In addition, this research will help follow-up researchers to further explore ways to apply Mind Mapping more appropriately to the teaching of high school English writing teaching. For students, using Mind Mapping to organize writing materials and build a writing framework will help improve their English writing skills. At the same time, it can also encourage students to actively participate in classroom activities. As a thinking tool, Mind Mapping can help stimulate students' divergent thinking and creative thinking.

2 Literature review

This chapter includes the definition and characteristics of mind mapping, research on English writing teaching and previous research on mind mapping at home and abroad.

2.1 Research on English writing teaching

2.1.1 Definitions of English Writing

Writing is the act of associating or communicating through the use of some tools to form symbols. In addition, it can transform the thought into visual form.

According to the functions of writing, there are the following definitions. Zamel believed that writing is a continuous process of thinking exploration. It not only can extend the original ideas, but also can elaborate and revise these ideas in detail (Zamel, 1982). Widdowson pointed out that the practice of language conventions does not meet the requirements of writing. It is just called composition. Only the activities that are used to communicate can be called writing (Widdowson, 1983)^[3]. As for the process and

importance of writing, Liu Runqing believes that writing reflects the meaning of writing and the advantages of human language can be measured by writing. (刘润清, 1999). Therefore, writing is not only a training process to improve writing skills, but also a comprehensive learning process, and all aspects are interrelated.

2.1.2 Approaches of teaching English Writing

Every teacher has his or her own English teaching methods in his or her daily writing teaching. Although the teaching methods may be different, the teaching principle is the same. There are several teaching models in common use as following:

2.2 The product-based approach

The product-based approach is a traditional writing teaching method, which is mainly about mastering the knowledge of language structure and imitating input.

The Product-based approach pays more attention to the end of the result. Behaviorism theory is the theoretical basis of Product-based approach, which shows that teaching is a continuous stimulus-response process. By using this method, teachers can help students analyze different types of compositions and train students' English writing ability, which can reduce students' confusion when facing different types of writing tasks. However, students are in a passive state in this process, and teachers cannot monitor each student's writing process.

3 Theoretical basis

This part, Mind Mapping which is based on Constructivism, Radiant Thinking, which will be introduced. These theories are the support of Mind Mapping to used to English writing teaching in senior high school.

3.1 Mind Mapping

Mind Mapping was firstly proposed by Tony Buzan, who was a well-known educator and distinguished chairman of the British Brain Foundation in the 1960s. He wrote many books containing *Use Your Perfect Memory*, *Use Both Sides of Your Brain*, *Make the most of Your Mind*, and *Brain Training*. This is the implementation of a lot of staff training steps. Global 500 companies, such as IBM, EDS, General Motor. His research results have had a great impact in various fields.

3.2 Constructivism

Constructivism believes that learning is a kind of construction, and the learning process is a process, which learners actively construct knowledge into their own cognitive structure. Constructivism believes that students are the center of teaching activities^[4]. Teachers are only the guides for students to construct knowledge. In classroom teaching, teachers need to pay attention to the knowledge that students have already learned. Pay attention to cultivating students' subjective awareness and creativity.

First of all, students need to recall the content and language knowledge, which is related to the writing topic according to the writing requirements. Secondly, the relevant content is integrated to make the disordered information structural and logical, and finally present a complete mind mapping content. This process is also the process of building new knowledge. And each student's experience is different, so they recall different writing materials and language knowledge. Differences in thinking habits and logical levels will also cause differences in composition. Besides, constructivism also emphasizes cooperative learning. Therefore, students can take the form of group cooperation and peer mutual assistance in the process of constructing mind mapping^[5].

4 Research design

Constructivism and Radiant thinking provide a solid theoretical basis for applying Mind Mapping in writing. The last chapter introduced the theoretical basis of Mind Mapping. Then the research questions, research subjects, research instruments, research procedures and research results will be stated in this chapter.

4.1 Research questions

There are many problems among students when they are writing. Firstly, the majority of students have writing anxiety. They think that English writing is too difficult. Secondly, it takes more time to improve writing results. In writing, it is often due to lack of vocabulary accumulation, weak basic knowledge, lack of language skills, lack of accumulation of classic sentences, and unsatisfactory writing methods. Finally, students' are lack of basic English knowledge and writing skills. There is no overall concept of coherent essay questions with paragraphs and sentences, and the article is fragmented. When writing, students' pay too much attention to the grammar and word spelling of each sentence but ignoring the cohesion of the sentences^[6].

In order to explore the effectiveness of Mind Mapping in senior high school English writing, and whether it is helpful in writing interest and writing ability, for the writing achievement, so the research questions are the following:

Can Mind Mapping alleviate English writing anxiety of senior high school students.

Can Mind Mapping have a positive effect on senior high school students' English writing strategies.

Can Mind Mapping improve the English writing skills of high school students?

Can the application of Mind Mapping arouse students' interest in English writing?

4.2 Research subjects

The research subjects of this thesis are senior high school students respectively from three high schools in Luonan, Danfeng and Shangzhou districts of Shangluo. Totally, 143 students participated in the research and all of them are learning English writing with Mind Mapping.

4.3 Research instruments

There are two kinds of instruments used in this thesis, including questionnaire and interview.

4.4 Research procedures

A designed questionnaire were distributed online to students. Students could complete the questionnaire and submit it within 3 days. Before the students filled in the questionnaire, it was emphasized that the data collected from this questionnaire was only used for the academic research, and there was no right or wrong answer for their choice. Therefore, they could fill in it with no hesitation. 143 copies of the questionnaire were collected, all of which were valid. After the questionnaire was collected, three students were invited randomly to have an interview and the interview contents were recorded. After the interview, the results were sorted out^[7].

5 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to explore the application and effectiveness of Mind Mapping in senior high school English writing teaching. Firstly, the application of Mind Mapping can improve students' interest and change students' attitude towards writing. According to the questionnaire and interview, the majority of the students had a positive attitude towards writing, and they would have confidence in their writing and take the initiative to finish the task. Secondly, according to the analysis of questionnaire data and interview results, Mind Mapping has a positive effect on senior high school students' English writing strategies. Thirdly, by using Radiant Thinking, Mind Mapping helps students to diverge their thinking and find useful information in the process of learning. Finally, through the results and analysis of interview, we found that Mind Mapping has different effects on students of different levels and their writing ability have been improved. To conclude, Mind Mapping-based English writing teaching model is suitable for senior high school English writing teaching. It is more effective in improving students English writing ability by applying Mind Mapping.

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