Research on improving English application ability of higher vocational students by board role-playing games

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Abstract: Since 1980s, higher vocational education has always been influenced by general higher education mode in teaching. The English teaching mode of higher vocational education also follows English teaching mode of ordinary higher education. According to students' actual situation of higher vocational colleges, English teaching mode suitable for students in higher vocational colleges has not been summarized. As a whole, vocational English teaching still adopts traditional "cramming education" teaching mode. Most English teachers use PPT to give a lecture, while students listen lectures passively, with little classroom interaction between teachers and students. It cannot carry out the teaching model that students act as main body and teachers act as the supplement. There are many students in higher vocational English class, and these students have different English levels. Most higher vocational students have weak English foundation and have not a correct learning method. Many students have less vocabulary accumulation, and their pronunciation is not standard, so they dare not communicate with others in English. Thus, higher vocational English teaching must change traditional teaching mode, change teachers' role in class, improve students' enthusiasm for learning English, and meet educational reforms that focus on cultivation of innovative spirit and practical ability.

Keywords: Board role-playing games; higher vocational English; application ability

1. Introduction

English teaching is being updated and transformed constantly. And contemporary higher vocational English teaching focuses on practicality and application. In a practical way, it needs to cultivate students' ability to apply English in work and life. As special English, business English is a tool used by professionals in international business communication. It has strong professional characteristics, which is a professional skill that foreign business personnel must master. Business English courses in higher vocational colleges focus on cultivating students' ability to apply English in various business activities and daily business. The content of course is closely related to business activities. It is committed to cultivating students' ability of English listening, speaking, reading and writing in general foreign activities and various foreign-related business activities, and improving English level of international trade. After students take up their jobs, they can adapt and use fluent English to complete work in foreign trade and economics quickly, accumulate social experience continuously, improve themselves and contribute to development of global foreign trade economy. In order to achieve teaching effect and ability goal, an active class is the foundation. A lively, pleasant and interesting class can motivate students to learn English actively, and ingenious class design can make students absorb knowledge and exercise skills well. Because of its particularity, business English puts forward higher requirements on courses, and class teaching links should focus on business activities. Higher vocational business

English teaching has been working hard to study new teaching methods, try to stimulate, awaken and encourage students and attract their interests in learning business English. In addition, the introduction of English games in class can improve students' enthusiasm for learning.

2. Overview of board role-playing games

2.1 Development history of board role-playing games

Board role-playing games is short for board games. It's a game that allows many people to play on the table. Board games generally refer to layout games, which uses special maps. It uses a large number of props to produce virtual resources and trade labor. Of course, it needs to be combined in the unified cultural background, while in foreign countries, board games have become publications like books. Originated in Germany, board games have been popular in Europe and America for decades, and they meet friends and make friends by games. In foreign countries, the content of board games involves war, trade, culture, art, urban construction, history and other aspects, most of which use paper materials and exquisite models. It is a face-to-face game with strong emphasis on communicating. Therefore, board games are the best way to communicate with family, friend and even business affairs. At the beginning of 21st century, it landed in China, and was popular among white-collar workers.

2.2 Contents of board games

"Board Role-playing Games" are divided into board games, card games, quiz games, etc. Games like checkers, scrabble, Monopoly Tycoon game are actually "board role-playing games". However, professional "Board Games" club offers more than 200 games, many of which are the most popular games in foreign countries and brought back by game lovers when traveling abroad. For traditional board games, like Monopoly Tycoon game (Monopoly) known to Chinese people and flying chess of our childhood, these games rely on luck to play like dice rolling.

Firstly, card collection games, Magic The Gathering and Game King belong to this kind of games, which have been popular in China in recent years, but it requires a lot of money for collecting cards to play games, and usually needs two players.

Secondly, poker cards have various game modes evolved from playing cards. As game rules are simple and suitable for multiplayer participation, and game tools are simple and cheap, it has become the most popular game in China. And luck also accounts for the main factors.

Thirdly, children and PARTY games, the rules of this game usually are simple. And luck is a major factor in game. Through cute cartoon image, it plays the role of intelligence and entertainment. Of which, SORRY and MAMAMIA are famous games.

Fourthly, strategic games, this game is the most popular and the most diverse. Through setting reasonable rules, it minimizes luck component and has a variety of subject categories. The game of SLG strategy, RPG role playing and war chess on the computer are all derived from board games.

3. Necessity of English class game teaching

3.1 Improve students' enthusiasm for English learning

As the English foundation of higher vocational college students is weak, the content of textbook lacks new ideas, the class atmosphere is dull, and teachers' teaching methods are relatively old-fashioned, they have no interest in English learning at all. However, by introducing games into teaching, students can not only relax themselves and eliminate their resistant emotion to English, but also acquire language in relaxed and happy atmosphere. During learning English, without any antipathy, students can get more joy, and students' learning initiative and enthusiasm will be greatly improved inevitably.

3.2 Strengthen students self-learning ability in English learning

English has always been a conflicting subject for students. Excepting coping with exams, students will not learn English actively. For learning English, "If they can avoid learning, they will avoid", not to mention self-study. The game is a kind of playing form, as it has certain rules to control. In the game, the participants should be happy. In the process of activities, they not only kill time. In game courses, learners can uses language correctly through activities. In English class, it can create relaxed and active class atmosphere by adopting game teaching method. In addition, the teachers can make rules well and give students enough time to learn English in pressure-free environment to win the game.

3.3 Cultivate students teamwork spirit

Most of post-90s students are the only child and have independent personalities. They like to be independent and are not willing to contact with others unless necessary. However, when teaching games in class, it is impossible for one person to complete teaching tasks. It needs two or even more people to cooperate. Only when they cooperate and help each other in games and gradually form tacit understanding can they win games finally. Through games, it further strengthens students' communication. Before the game, students can generate strategies, put forward ideas and express their opinions during discussion, which cultivates students' ability of teamwork.

4. Specific application of board games in English class

4.1 The overall design idea of teaching gamification

The overall design of teaching gamification is guided by "Hero Journey" model. The concept of "Hero Journey" was first proposed by Joseph Campbell in 1949, and later perfected by Christopher Folger. The "Hero Journey" means that ordinary people encounter challenges or difficulties in daily lives, with the help of guides, they overcome difficulties and obstacles through unremitting efforts and struggles. After gaining more power, they return to daily life. This concept is widely used in designing hero characters and game activities. In the design of overall teaching activities, students should be considered to participate in teaching activities as leading role, experience different activity designs, complete their transformation and experience sense of growth. In teaching game, it can design spiral rising form of "encounter tasks - ability improvement - new tasks - new improvement". Each teaching task can be slightly difficult for student's current level, provide necessary conditions for students to create in games, and improve students' self-efficacy in English learning.

When designing teaching content, teachers can set up two modules according to students' communication environment. The modules are campus English and business English. Each module uses a specific student figure. From the beginning of entry school, there are four sections (stages): entry - integration - advancement - summary. For example, in campus English section, students create an account on teaching platform and use their own virtual characters to study the content of four stages, including entry into campus, integrate into campus, campus advancement, and campus summaries. For business English, it contains entry into workplace, integrate into work, work advancement and work summary. The design of Hero Journey of Student English is as follows:

Campus English: Lv.1 Entry, ① Daily self-introduction; ② Be familiar with campus environment

Lv.2 Integration, Campus clothes, food, house, travel

Lv.3 Advancement, ① Know specialized courses, ② Explore learning methods

Lv.4 Summary, ① Personal semester summary, ② Make a study plan

Business English: Lv.1 Entry, ① Work self-introduction; ② Be familiar with workplace environment

Lv.2 Integration, Business reception, business travel

Lv.3 Advancement, ① Know work content, ② Master work skills

Lv.4 Summary, ① Company annual meeting summary, ② Make a work plan

Compared with campus English section, business English section can choose similar topics, but it need change activity scene, cultivate work ability and accomplishment, and master higher-level language knowledge. For example, self-introduction of campus English highlights basic information and hobbies, and master basic grammar. While

self-introduction of business English mainly introduces job title, work unit and job responsibilities based-on basic information, which reflects spiral rising in difficulty and content.

At the beginning of courses, students' default grades are F (i.e. unqualified), through step-by-step design of each module, it cooperates with teachers to release teaching tasks and allows students to submit homework for several times (no more than three times). And student will get corresponding tests and grades for each project they complete. This procedural assessment not only enables students to understand their own situation intuitively, but also urges students to accept new tasks and challenges actively in order to achieve their final learning goal, so as to build concepts of independent learning and active learning. Through design of pre-class preview, in-class task display, communication and sharing, after-class review, it provides more language contact opportunities for students. For students with different grades, they can choose the tasks that meet their own difficulty on teaching platform, and get corresponding scores after completing tasks. Since the teaching platform can be set up by teachers before class, and preparation time is sufficient, students can understand and master corresponding knowledge through learning in class, complete corresponding tasks in class and after class and expand learning time width. Moreover, this overall design has good promotion significance for students' personalized guidance.

4.2 Design of specific teaching links for teaching gamification

4.2.1 Differentiate students learning motivation, adopt different design concepts

When designing specific teaching activities, it should consider students' internal motivation and external motivation. Students with internal motivation will focus on meaning and fun of learning, and they are easy to develop good learning habits. Students with external motivation are easy to develop good study habits because of material rewards, social fun and other conditions outside of learning or design. After clearly distinguishing students with internal motivation and external motivation, it adopts different game activity design and reward mechanisms for students with different grades. It not only highlights knowledge examination, but also cultivating learning attitudes and habits. Students with poor grades can refer to reward mechanism of "participating can get scores" instead of "comparative" reward mechanism. In addition, it can develop students' active learning habits gradually by enhancing external motivation for student to participate in activities. For students with good grades, by adding the design of "student bring students" and "team leader", it encourages them to participate in management of teaching activities, drive other students to learn and provide additional rewards for their participation. Also, it is possible to improve students' ability of learning and interacting with others by increasing the difficulty of test (adding optional questions). During taking charge of "team leader" management and "guiding students", students with good grades can test whether they really master what they have learned by explaining knowledge to others, as well as gain a sense of growth and satisfaction of learning. Thus, through design of "comparative" reward mechanism and increase the difficulty of task, it can improve such students' internal motivation, focusing on completing tasks .

4.2.2 Using teaching platform, student's learning process is digitized

By participating in activities on teaching platform, such as finish homework, submitting works, answering questions and brainstorming, students not only can gain experience point, but also have a clear understanding of knowledge they have acquired. As "digital natives", post-90s students emphasize feedback of information timely. Therefore, the teaching platform or other digital media materials are used to monitor and feedback students' learning process in time. The feedback information must be open and transparent, so that students check it at any time. In terms of gamification monitoring in teaching, it can improve students' interest and effect of learning effectively through students' self-monitoring, teacher-assisted monitoring, computer-aided monitoring and other monitoring strategies. Of which, computer-aided monitoring can show students' tasks completion, experience point accumulation, learning effect ranking and peer grading from the teaching platform. Students are immersed in learning tasks through open and transparent data feedback. At present, the market of these platforms is relatively mature and can be screened according to teaching needs.

4.2.3 Fun and appropriate game means

According to analysis of class learning situation, different rewards are designed for students with different learning abilities and habits. Through students' sense of achievement, exploration and social interaction, they can experience joy beyond learning content. Thus, they can learn languages in relaxed and pleasant environment. And appropriate game means can refer to Kevin Werbach's DMC analysis of gamification (from dynamic mechanism of game design, game mechanism to specific introduction of game elements), which has strong guiding significance. By adding specific game elements, for example: leaderboards, points, group collaboration and virtual avatars, students can learn English in relaxed environment. In addition, it can guide students to conduct exploratory learning on online platform, develop good learning habits gradually and experience learning fun. In terms of specific game element design, teachers can also transfer knowledge according to game mechanism or rules that they or students are familiar with.

5. Conclusion

In actual teaching, teachers can further adjust game rules according to teaching content. The teaching purpose and key point of each lesson are different, so the content of competition should be changed accordingly. In English teaching of higher vocational colleges, game activities should be introduced. Using game teaching method, it can not only create good class atmosphere, but also improve students' interest in learning English and improve self-learning ability. Thus, English teaching will be more effective. Meanwhile, the class learning can be really returned to students, and let students "study by doing, learn by doing". Throughout the process, students can give full play to their subjective initiative and creativity, laying good foundation for their future career.

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