

On Strategies of Developing Student Questioning Ability in the English Class of Vocational College

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Abstract: *The student's creative spirit and ability is regarded as one of the educational ideas of the eighth English curriculum reform to which the student's questioning ability is usually prior. However, the student's questioning ability is low in the procedures of English teaching of the elementary education in China, which becomes an obstacle to the implementation of new educational objectives of the English curriculum. To enrich this study field, referring to Zone of Proximal Development Theory, Constructivism Theory and Second Language Acquisition Theory, a twelve-week experiment study have explored five strategies used for fostering student questioning ability: (1) Consciousness strategy enforces students' questioning awareness; (2) Environment strategy offers relaxing atmosphere; (3) Model strategy leads students how to raise questions; (4) Time strategy offers enough time; (5) Evaluation strategy encourages further questioning.*

Keywords: Questioning ability; Strategies; English class; Vocational College.

1. BACKGROUND OF THE PRESENT STUDY

At present, educators all over the world are generally focusing on developing the senior student ability of creation and questioning. The key of the new curriculum's reform is to develop the student awareness of creation and the ability of practice, whose core is the creative thinking. As we all know, "questioning" is the essence of thinking and learning," so cultivating the student sense of asking questions and the ability of questions play an important role.

In reality, fostering the vocational college student creativity is influenced by a variety of factors, among which is student questioning ability. According to the American scholar, made a systematic study on teachers' questioning and found that teachers questioning as well as student answering occupied 80% of the class time. And accordingly, teachers' questioning was regarded as the core of effective teaching. The prior research provides us with a lot about class questioning. Unfortunately, the focus of most studies is on teachers' class questioning, and that of students is neglected. Most class questions were teacher's questions but students seldom asked questions in class.

In recent years, the concerned study has been done on student questioning in the other subjects. Most of these researches are mainly theoretical analysis, seldom providing operational methods to improve it. Moreover, there are studies for other subjects rather than English, especially for Senior English leaning.

With a view to keeping up with the new developments of education in China, to promote quality education and meet the needs of the society in the new era, the Education Ministry of Chinese government promulgated the Senior English Curriculum Requirements(For Trial Implementation) which point out that it is necessary to end over-emphasizing the transmission and explanation of knowledge about grammar and vocabulary and neglecting to develop student ability to use language for real, develop student positive attitudes, thinking skills, practical abilities as autonomous and lifelong learners. The curriculum promotes quality education and the all-round development of the students, so education particular attention must be paid to foster student creativity.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

"Suspecting is the beginning of thinking and studying"; "Learning without doubt is dangerous. You'll make progress if you have doubts." Questioning is a kind of scientific attitude and ability, which has close relations with thinking. It glows the precious spirit of seeking truth. Dare to questioning, good at questioning, glad to questioning and training the student questioning ability is a new demand that the era puts forward for education.

In former class teaching, the teacher prepare lessons to all make a point of very much to the design of the questions, guiding the students to know the unknown knowledge gradually by answering the different problem definitely in teaching process, Continuously for a long time hence, this kind of traditional teaching mode, with question-solving as goal, make students form the study habit of relying on the teachers' questioning, thus they are lack of questioning ability, however. Training student questioning ability helps them to play subject functions, to develop the good individual characters, to reserve knowledge and to let them know the way to study.

It is widely believed that in order to learn well, one must be able to question well. Previous research findings indicate that the practice of vocational college student questioning ability is not satisfactory, which to a certain extent affects student creativity. In the present English class in vocational college, student shallow ability and awareness of initiative thinking, bold imagination, scientific criticism. In view of this situation, this thesis, in accordance with the English subjects of the new vocational college curriculum requirements, centers on "cultivate student questioning ability". Employing both theories and practice, the author makes an attempt to explore how to train student questioning ability through the English learning.

3. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE STUDENT QUESTIONING ABILITY EFFICIENCY

Asking questions is an essential teaching strategy is used in English classroom teaching. It can promote involvement, motivate students, and improve ability, That is, the effectiveness of student questioning depends on its strategies, Basing on Orstein and other relative researches on questioning strategies, student questioning strategies cover the following five: consciousness strategy; environment strategy; model strategy; time strategy; evaluation strategy.

3.1 Consciousness Strategy

The consciousness raising consists of the teacher's reminders of the factors that questioning is required in reading: (a) The strategy could give students as readers a hand (e.g., helped them recite what they read, checked their understanding, took part in possible test, drew their attention); (b) The strategy worked (e.g., helped them answer questions, generated or found an suitable questions, checked if they understood, If not, what did they do); and (c) how this strategy helped them to process texts actively, to monitor their comprehension and develop the competence of learning English.

3.2 Environment Strategy

Anxiety influences the student English study when a learner is expected to perform in the second or foreign language learning. It is believed that anxiety is one of the dominant factors influencing language learning. Tension--the major the teacher's reminders of the factors that questioning is required in reading source of anxiety--has a negative impact on the learning results. Therefore, the teachers must create a pleasant and a more relaxing atmosphere in the English class reduce the student anxiety in the course of learning English, so students can take an active position to learn knowledge and students can be encourage as questioners.

In addition, In a relative relaxing atmosphere, student self-confidence can be fostered. Students are willing to take an active part in activities to raise more effective questions. In a word, teachers should work on his or her teaching truly from humanistic perspective of teaching, considering student affective factors and their psychology so that they can endeavor to promote their student questioning ability.

3.3 Model Strategy

In the previous investigation, students explained why they chose the items" Can you ask questions positively?", "Can you find the questions that others can't find in the process of learning English?". The main reason is that many students don't know how to ask questions" and "cannot find a question" respectively as the main reason why they don't ask questions.

Generally speaking, teachers conduct class questioning to develop interest and motivate students to become actively involved in lesson, evaluate student preparation and check on homework or seatwork completion, review and summarize previous lesson, assess achievement of instructional goals and objectives, develop critical thinking skills and inquiring attitudes, check on teacher's clarity, and any other things.

It's necessary for the teacher to model how to use the approach of questioning in the reading. At first, the teacher showed all the questions to the students for the students to answer. Subsequently the teacher also asked the students to ask some more questions with King's generic questions as the teacher did just now. They were also required to write their questions down. then the teacher and the students discuss together to find answers to all the questions that they had raised. At last, when all the questions were solved, the teacher asked some students to summarize the text. With the guidance of the teacher, the students followed the same procedures in later classes.

3.4 Time Strategy

It is important for students to have sufficient wait time to find and raise questions after the tasks have been assigned for them. Wait time includes the length of time between the teachers' model questioning and the student questioning. Adequate wait time is helpful to initiate student questioning, at least they offer enough time for students to construct their thinking.

Most of the teachers leave the student questioning time about five minutes at the end of their class. They think it is the limited time for them to fulfill the schedule. Teachers' use of an extended wait time will have positive effects on student science comprehension achievement, while no significant results due to increased wait time could be found in student achievement scores on the knowledge or low cognitive-level test.

In order to promote student understanding and questioning ability, the teacher should leave enough time for students to find out questions and obtain useful information.

3.5 Evaluation Strategy

Timely feedback to student questioning is a guarantee to questioning effectively. Evaluation strategies exist four means in common use:(a)The praise from teachers shows teachers' acceptance and agreement with student questioning. It is an effective way to inspire underachievers. All the students will feel stimulated and delighted when they are praised. After that, they will make more effort to ask questions. The students expect praising more from their peers than from teachers. (b)Encouraging is used when students could not or dare not ask questions, teachers should encourage students and help them to ask questions bravely. The student will be frustrated if teachers neglected their poor performance. (c)Quoting is an indirect way to praise students. Once teachers use such a sentence pattern "Just as...said just now..." students will feel successful and being accepted. And the quoting will arouse student intense interest in questioning. (d)Besides those means above, gestures can also be used by teachers, facial expressions such as smiling, frowning and other non-verbal ways to express their feedback.

In a word, the comparison of the scores between the two classes in the pre -test and post-test indicated that questioning learning have made a greater progress than the control class did under the teacher's instruction, after analysis of the results of questionnaire for students, face-face interviews to teachers and students and a twelve -week experiment study on student questioning ability in the senior high school English class.

4. CONCLUSION

Asking questions can promote involvement, motivate students, and improve ability, and the effectiveness of student questioning depends on its strategies, Through 12-week tentative teaching on student questioning, the author have concluded cover the following five student questioning strategies to assist students in exploring how to question effectively.

There exists some limitations in the current study due to the researcher's green experience and few study on student questioning ability at home. Due to the limitations of my knowledge and objective conditions, the present empirical study is merely an explorative one, and there is much room left to be studied.

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