Application Strategies of Modern Information Technology in Language Teaching Activities in Universities

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Abstract: The widespread use of modern information technology in various fields of social life has brought about earth-shaking changes to contemporary people in terms of lifestyles and values. At the same time, information technology has also had a significant impact on the development of education, changing people’s education concepts and educational methods. Information technology also plays an important supporting role in teaching language and writing courses in colleges and universities by helping educators get rid of traditional teaching models, outdated teaching methods and single evaluation systems, thereby effectively improving students' language and writing application abilities.

1. Introduction

As an important tool for communication and cultural transmission, the importance of language is self-evident. At present, colleges and universities attach great importance to both Chinese teaching and foreign language teaching; because everyone generally realizes that higher education requires good language expression and application abilities, in addition to enabling the educated to master solid professional knowledge and possess excellent professional skills. Language application ability is one of the core professional abilities of contemporary people.

However, the current language teaching concepts in colleges and universities still largely remain in the traditional teaching concepts and teaching models, which focus too much on the teaching of basic knowledge and ignore the important impact of context on learners, resulting in poor learners' actual language use ability, thus teaching objectives cannot be achieved effectively. Therefore, language teachers in colleges and universities should rationally use modern information technology to create interesting and efficient classes for students so that they can achieve good learning results.

2. Current Problems in Language Teaching in Universities

The current language teaching in colleges and universities includes writing teaching, reading teaching and Mandarin tweet teaching, which embodies the cultivation of language abilities in reading, writing and speaking. In the process of achieving these three teaching goals, there are generally problems in the following aspects:

2.1. Teaching Concepts and Teaching Methods Are Outdated

Most language teaching in colleges and universities focuses on theoretical teaching, especially in reading and writing teaching, which focuses more on the teaching of language knowledge and lacks attention to practical teaching or the ability to carry out practical teaching. This results in students’ being unable to transfer the language learned in the classroom. When knowledge is applied to practice, it is just a simple and mechanical memorization of the lexical and grammatical knowledge in the textbook, which turns into some dead knowledge after the course examination. It cannot truly achieve the teaching goal of combining theory and practice and comprehensively improving students' language literacy.

2.2. Language Teaching Materials Are Far Away from Actual Needs Of Society

On the one hand, the content of the textbooks is too monotonous and outdated, and many reading passages, writing examples, and even some examples and vocabularies about morphology and grammar cannot be updated in time according to the changes of the times and the actual needs of social life, which leads to a great reduction in students’ interest in learning; on the other hand, because teachers have narrow access to fresh language teaching materials, the materials used in the teaching process often lag behind social reality and cannot keep pace with the times. It also cannot fundamentally improve students’ enthusiasm and initiative for language learning, resulting in students’
being unable to understand the essential purpose of learning language.

2.3. Single Evaluation Method

A test paper determines the students’ study life. Teachers teach for the exam and students learn for the exam [1]. This single evaluation method greatly reduces students’ interest in language learning and fails to motivate students to improve their language abilities. The narrow evaluation method makes students become slaves of scores and examination machines. This old evaluation method stifles students’ enthusiasm, initiative and creativity in learning to a certain extent.

3. The Role of Modern Information Technology in Language Teaching Activities in Universities

The rapid development of new media and the widespread use of modern information technology in all areas of social life have brought about earth-shaking changes to contemporary people in terms of lifestyles and values. At the same time, information technology has also had a significant impact on the development of education, changing people's educational concepts and educational methods. Information technology also plays an important supporting role in teaching language and writing courses in colleges and universities by helping educators get rid of traditional teaching models, outdated teaching methods and single evaluation systems, thereby effectively improving students' language and writing application abilities.

3.1. Change Teaching Concepts to Achieve Language Teaching Goals

Due to the limitations of traditional teaching methods, we have misunderstood the teaching goal of being able to speak and write in language teaching, especially Chinese language teaching. Being able to speak only means being able to pronounce relatively accurately; Being able to write means being able to write accurately. This is not the ultimate goal of higher language education.

“Being able to speak” in the goals of higher language education is not only accurate pronunciation, but also the content of speaking. The content of speaking must be accurate and vivid, reflecting the beauty of the language; “Being able to write” is ultimately based on content, being able to use language symbols clearly, and express thoughts accurately and profoundly. "Being able to speak and write" is not just about being able to express, and one must be able to express at an advanced level. This is the goal of higher language teaching. Modern information technology can help language teaching get rid of old teaching concepts, use modern and rich technical means to complete tasks that traditional teaching cannot complete, achieve better teaching effects, achieve teaching goals, and improve students’ practical ability to use language.

3.2. Help to Update Teaching Content and Innovate Teaching Models

The teaching purpose determines the teaching content, and the teaching content assists the realization of the teaching purpose. Excellent teaching content can stimulate students’ interest in learning and enhance students’ thinking and innovation abilities. However, due to the traditional teaching model, higher language teaching materials lag behind the development and needs of social life.

Language is the product of social civilization. It is born in social life and serves social life. It is the most important tool for social communication. Society is developing and progressing, and language is no exception. It is accompanied by the continuous development and changes of social life. Some old languages will gradually evolve, and some new language phenomena will continue to appear. Therefore, our language teaching must keep pace with the times. Modern information technology first provides language teaching workers in colleges and universities with more convenient and broader ways to obtain new teaching materials; it can also use advanced technical means to display the development and changes of language to learners intuitively and comprehensively, making the teaching content more systematic and rich, thereby improving learners’ interest in learning, broadening learners’ horizons on language learning, and ultimately helping to achieve the teaching goals.

Modern information technology can not only bring fresh blood to teaching content, but also change the old teaching model to a greater extent. Due to the limitations of traditional teaching concepts and teaching implementation methods, the language teaching model has stayed in the "cramming" mode for a long time. The lecturer outputs knowledge boringly and the learners passively accept knowledge. This model is difficult to form an ideal classroom with “clear goals”, “active atmosphere” and “high participation”. Such a teaching model will also stifle learners' enthusiasm and potential for learning. The progress and development of modern information technology has brought opportunities for language education in colleges and universities to get rid of the old teaching model and adopt new educational methods; especially the emergence of new media has provided the possibility of constructing a new teaching model for language teaching. Combining information technology and adopting personalized teaching design makes it possible to realize the ancient educational concept of “teaching students in accordance with their aptitude”.

3.3. Change Students’ Learning Methods and Improve Teaching Achievement Evaluation System

Modern information technology has changed human production, life and ways of thinking, and has also had a significant impact on the learning styles of college students. Modern information technology can greatly
meet the personalized learning needs of learners, which is reflected in the ways to acquire knowledge and learning methods.

“Learning methods mainly refer to the approaches, measures or strategies adopted by learners in the learning process, which are the basic forms of learning activities. [2] In our country, the main way for learners to acquire knowledge for thousands of years is classroom learning. Although traditional classroom learning method is irreplaceable and still plays an important role in language learning in colleges and universities today. However, a single classroom learning method has very obvious limitations. The application of modern information technology in language education in colleges and universities has changed the way students obtain knowledge. It breaks the traditional main way to obtain knowledge. Learners can use computers or other mobile terminals to obtain what they need accurately, timely and quickly on various network platforms to rich language learning materials.

Modern information technology in language education in colleges and universities not only changes the way students acquire knowledge, but also makes students' personalized learning methods possible. Mobile terminals such as smartphones and tablets are commonly used by modern college students. Social software such as WeChat, QQ, Weibo, and creative short video software such as Douyin are also widely accepted. MOOCs in universities provide learners with more freedom: students choose the time and place to study independently and use fragmented time to study. Therefore, modern information technology provides powerful assistance for learners to transform from "receptive learning to discovery learning".

Information technology not only assists the teaching process, but also plays an important role in the reform of the language teaching evaluation system. It can provide more scientific, comprehensive, and objective evaluation methods, eliminate the shortcomings of traditional evaluation and assessment methods, and allow comprehensive evaluation of students’ language application. It becomes possible to comprehensively evaluate students’ listening, speaking, reading, writing and thinking abilities.

4. Application Strategies of Modern Information Technology In Language Teaching in Universities

4.1. Use information technology to build a Blended teaching model

Language teaching generally improves students' listening, listening, reading and writing abilities through links such as reading teaching, writing teaching and phonics and grammar teaching. In view of the current problems existing in all aspects of language teaching in colleges and universities, we should make full use of modern information technology, combined with language teaching objectives, and create new teaching models and it has become an inevitable choice for language teaching in contemporary colleges and universities. The teachers should give full play to the role of information technology, establish a highly intelligent language learning environment, carry out smart learning, fully integrate traditional offline classroom teaching with online teaching supported by modern information technology, and build a teaching model suitable for contemporary learners. The Blended teaching mode is based on the concept of Blended learning [3], which "integrates the advantages of online learning and traditional classroom learning, makes up for the shortcomings of both, and is the transcendence and promotion of online learning and traditional classroom" [4]. The application of the hybrid teaching model allows both teachers and students to use various new teaching models to establish an ideal teaching process that is student-centered and teacher-led.

In language teaching, teachers can use the MOOC, SPOC or MOOC+SPOC model according to the characteristics of the course and the specific situation of the students. Before class, the relevant knowledge of reading, writing or oral communication can be uploaded in the form of micro-lectures, videos, or network links. On the platform, students can complete the preview of course content and understand relevant knowledge through online learning, laying a knowledge foundation for offline classroom learning. For example, regarding classic reading in Chinese teaching, pre-class teachers can use MOOC or group class discussion areas to publish reading tasks in the form of discussion questions in advance to help better complete offline classroom reading teaching tasks. Moreover, the use of the discussion board breaks the constraints of the classroom environment on reading teaching in the traditional classroom teaching model, allowing every learner to have the opportunity to speak, which can help teachers more comprehensively grasp students' understanding of text reading and improve the quality of classroom teaching.

4.2. Use Information Technology to Innovate Teaching Methods

To improve the quality of classroom teaching, scientific and effective teaching methods are needed to stimulate students' interest in learning and improve their enthusiasm for active learning. Therefore, in language teaching in colleges and universities, teachers must combine the characteristics of the curriculum and students themselves, and use information technology to innovate teaching method.

In the Chinese classic reading courses, teachers can not only use online platforms to easily obtain course-related teaching materials to expand students' reading horizons, but also use film and television materials on the Internet to help students through comparison and restoration. Grasp and understand the connotation and purpose of classic works.

In the teaching of modern Chinese Mandarin, we can use various Mandarin learning software on the Internet,
such as "Xinhua Dictionary" APP, Changyan Mandarin APP, and "Mandarin Town" APP, to help students correct and practice pronunciation. You can also use dubbing show, must-cut, handheld dubbing and other software to dub certain classic foreign language film and television works in dialects and Mandarin respectively. On the one hand, it improves students’ interest in learning, and on the other hand, they can understand dialects and Mandarin more intuitively through comparison, phonetic differences. Through these technical means, it not only makes language teaching more interesting, but also helps students understand the cultural connotations hidden behind language phenomena.

In writing teaching, teachers use online platforms to obtain rich and fresh teaching cases and writing materials that are close to current life, and publish them through online teaching platforms to solve the problem of the singleness of text materials and the lag in content in offline classroom teaching.

By information technology, we can change the traditional teaching method of language teaching which is just a matter of imparting knowledge face by face, make language teaching close to life, and establish a lively and interesting classroom teaching environment in a suitable way for learners to receive knowledge.

4.3. Use Information Technology to Build a Scientific Evaluation System

As a way to evaluate language teaching results, the traditional single test can test students’ language application ability to a certain extent, but it has great limitations. It cannot evaluate the objective situation of students’ language learning comprehensively and scientifically and cannot reflect students’ specific performance in the learning process, and cannot scientifically reflect students’ actual language ability. The strategy to change this situation is to use information technology to combine “summative evaluation” and “process evaluation”[5], and establish a scientific and diversified evaluation system.

In addition to the influence of evaluation concepts, it is difficult to evaluate students’ learning process accurately during language teaching due to limitations of technical means. We should introduce modern information technology and use data analysis generated in each new teaching model to control students’ learning process in a timely manner. Through the learner behavior log automatically generated by the MOOC platform, teachers can conduct a complete and accurate evaluation of the students’ entire language learning process through discussion participation in the discussion area and completion of self-test questions, and understand the students’ specific performance in the learning process comprehensively. Teachers can also use a combination of online and offline evaluation methods, using data generated by online learning platforms and various offline classroom software, such as Rain Classroom and Group Classroom, to complete process evaluation under the hybrid teaching model. Teachers can also use big data generated by various teaching models to understand students and learning situations, promptly discover problems and deficiencies in the process, and make corrections and improvements to ensure the realization of teaching goals, and ensure the quality of teaching through teachers’ self-teaching evaluation.

5. Conclusion

The rapid development of information technology has profoundly changed human social life. In the field of education, students’ learning methods, ways of acquiring knowledge, and ways of thinking have all undergone tremendous changes. To achieve the educational goal of cultivating high-quality talents, we must innovate teaching models and teaching methods. American scholar Martinez Kaitlin found that teachers are used to teaching in their own education.[6] “Teachers are the important gatekeepers of technology into school education”[7]. Therefore, language teaching in colleges and universities must continue to study and explore the in-depth integration of information technology in language and writing teaching, stimulate students’ interest in learning, improve various teaching mechanisms, and improve the quality of language teaching.

References