

The Application of Mobile Learning Based on WeChat in College English Teaching

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Abstract: With the popularity of Internet and mobile phones, mobile learning based on WeChat has attracted wide attention. This paper mainly introduces the characteristics of mobile learning, expounds the necessary conditions and tips relevant to using mobile learning, and applies mobile learning based on WeChat to college English teaching.

Keywords: WeChat; Mobile Learning; College English

1. Introduction

As a new social communication tool, WeChat can break the limitations of communication operating system platforms, with the help of Internet and information technology. It is a wider information medium that enables people to send messages, audios and videos at an extremely fast speed, and realize the communication between two or more people. Since it was launched by Tencent in 2011, it has been widely used and considered as an important instant messaging service software in new media areas. It is obvious that WeChat has partially replaced traditional communication ways and has become an essential social communication tool in public, especially among young college students.

College English is a compulsory course which aims to cultivate students' comprehensive English abilities, especially their listening and speaking skills. With the support of information technology, English teaching and learning can, to a certain extent, be free from the limitation of time and place, and develop individualized and autonomous learning by using mobile learning based on WeChat. Some experts hold the view that this new teaching mode can enrich the teaching content of college English, improve the learning flexibility, build a better atmosphere of autonomous learning and collaborative learning, increase the improvement of students' learning efficiency and effectiveness, and promote teachers' professional knowledge and skills. This article will discuss the concepts of mobile learning and feasibility of applying WeChat to mobile learning in college English, analyzes the teaching design, and finally gives alternative mobile learning strategies of college English based on WeChat from multiple levels, aiming at providing reference for WeChat and mobile learning in college English.

2. Characteristics of mobile learning

2.1 Mobile learning is learner-centered

With the popularity of smart phones, mobile learning based on WeChat is more suitable for college students' learning habits. Learners can arrange their daily learning content, learning progress and time independently according to their own interests and English proficiency. Students can also manage their study independently, and learn freely at anytime and anywhere. For example, students can use fragmented time such as walking, eating, and resting to listen to English audios, watch interesting videos or browse English news, which can greatly increase the input of English language, and improve their listening and speaking skills. Meanwhile, this learner-centered mode can stimulate students' learning enthusiasm, cultivate their active learning and subjective initiative, and enhance their self-study ability.

2.2 Mobile learning is a flexible learning method.

For English learners, mobile learning can be carried out in any form by use of modern technology. Mobile phones as learning equipment are flexible for choosing learning forms and materials. It is different from the traditional teaching mode

which needs classroom and fixed learning time and content. The operation of WeChat is also very convenient, so students can study in various forms according to their actual situation.

In addition, teachers will offer extensive listening and reading exercises with more background or cultural knowledge, which can assist students to consolidate learning points after class by WeChat. To some extent, the mobile learning can prolong the students' overall study time, effectively solve the problem of limited classroom time, and arouse students' interest and self-confidence.

2.3 Mobile learning can promote the interaction between teachers and students.

WeChat has the function of sending instant messages. By Wechat teachers can do online communication and interaction with students, guide them to complete related learning tasks, and timely answer difficult questions that students encounter, and achieve zero-distance communication between teachers and students. In addition, teachers can also encourage students to learn English materials in their spare time, analyze and summarize their learning content, and finally require students to show what they have learned in the form of presentation. By sharing learning content and experience, teachers can increase the interaction with students, and improve their relationship. At the same time, teachers can also motivate students to make speeches about their achievements in public by mobile learning, which can strengthen their sense of accomplishment and create a good learning atmosphere. Therefore, mobile learning is an advanced learning mode which can improve students' enthusiasm, and cultivate their ability to share and cooperate with others in class and after class.

2.4 Mobile learning can provide up-to-date learning resources and comfortable learning atmosphere

WeChat can update English resources by internet and offer more attractive learning content for college students' continuous learning. The diverse topics and forms include pictures, dialogues, news, films and more which can better meet students' needs and promote learning long term. Moreover, mobile learning is conducive to creating a relaxed learning atmosphere. The virtual network environment created by WeChat provides a free and informal communication platform for students, reduces their anxiety and allows them to participate in discussions more actively. The combination of network teaching and classroom teaching can promote students' habit of speaking bravely and actively, and effectively cultivate students' English expression and communication ability.

3. Necessary conditions for carrying out mobile learning

3.1 Equipment and technology

Mobile learning requires students to have smart phone. The mobile phone's memory, network connection speed, and quality of battery need to be considered in mobile learning. At present, almost all college students have a smart phone, which provides hardware guarantee for mobile learning. Moreover, students need wireless networks to use WeChat. Currently, many universities support WIFI, which creates a good network environment for students' mobile learning.

3.2 Students and teachers

College students are more willing to learn and accept new things, which provides a guarantee for mobile learning. Mobile learning has higher requirements for students' consciousness, self-discipline and self-control. Learners should have a correct attitude towards mobile learning, and set a reasonable learning time and schedule. They should not be influenced by some entertainment functions on mobile phones, which will delay their English learning. In addition, students should pay attention to the combination of work and rest, and avoid eye fatigue due to long time use of mobile phones.

From the aspect of teachers, mobile learning based on WeChat is an extension of classroom teaching activities. They should be optimistic about the application of WeChat in teaching. They need to master and understand its functions, comprehensively guide students, and monitor them in time. Moreover, teachers need enough time and patience to keep online interaction with students and answer their questions online.

4. Mobile learning based on WeChat in learning English

4.1 Vocabulary learning based on WeChat.

Using WeChat for learning English can help students to accumulate good English words and sentences in electronic forms and look up to dictionary for free. Students can learn common topic words everyday according to words' list and text. With a large vocabulary, English scores can be gradually improved. Teachers can use dictation in class to check whether students have a basic grasp of new words. Students can continue to review and consolidate their vocabulary after class by using WeChat.

4.2 Listening and speaking training based on WeChat.

Mobile learning based on WeChat can offer multi-modal resources, which can enable students to get multiple sensory experiences, increases their learning interests and stimulate their learning motivation. For example, students can listen to English news by WeChat and memorize words and sentences they hear in the text as quickly as possible. This practice can not only train students' listening, but also improve their ability to spell words and understand sentences. Teachers can also simplify listening practice, which can reduce students' learning pressure and increase the mutual trust between teachers and students. What's more, learners are free to choose their favorite topics, imitate and follow them. Teachers can also let students share their own recordings with the class group, help students correct their pronunciation and improve their English fluency through teachers' and students' mutual comments, so students can unconsciously cultivate their oral English ability. According to language input hypothesis put forward by Krashen, an American scholar, language input should be moderate and the difficulty should be slightly higher than the learners' existing language knowledge. Teachers can assist students to get enough comprehensible input and require them to complete the output of spoken English by internalizing what they have learned.

5. Teaching suggestions for mobile learning based on WeChat

Mobile learning based on WeChat is an innovative way of learning. Students need to conscientiously complete the systematic study of teaching materials. They must be strict with themselves and have strong self-discipline. Learners should finish their daily learning tasks on time according to the teaching plan. They should not be distracted by playing mobile games. In addition, teachers need to supervise students' learning situation in time, and give guidance to students with weak English foundation. Teachers should also cultivate students' self-monitoring ability, make effective use of extracurricular time to learn by mobile learning and WeChat, design reasonable plans, explore appropriate learning methods, and reflect on their own learning effects.

6. Conclusion

Mobile learning based on WeChat is conducive to cultivating students' autonomous learning skill and cooperative ability. As a new learning method, mobile learning has a positive impact on college English teaching. WeChat can effectively supplement the English teaching content and encourage students to use spare time to learn. Moreover, teachers respect students, understand students' personalities and hobbies, and guide them to consciously complete their learning tasks. Students are also more willing to train basic English skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, so as to improve their English proficiency. In a word, WeChat mobile learning can better promote the reform and improve the teaching effect of college English.

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