

Pre-Teach Based on Student-Centered Learning in Higher Education

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Abstract: This paper centers on the learning obstacles of university students and proposes the pre-teach section to improve learning and retention based on student-centered teaching. 130 participants, all freshman students of a university in northwestern China were purposely selected to experience the pre-teach approach. It addresses the problems of students who are lack of sufficient preliminary knowledge and motivation in class and constructs a learning community for both teachers and students. However, a major problem with this kind of application is the time required for teachers to prepare before class and to customize lesson planning.

Key words: student- centered, higher education, teaching methodology, pre-teach

1. Introduction

The shift from teacher-centered approach to student-centered approach has been the center of attention in teaching and learning during the last couple of decades. While the term is widely accepted and used, many teachers only apply it when delivering the class, and not before it. According to Degago and Kaino(2015), a conventional teacher-centered education usually centers on the imparting of knowledge from teachers to students and always focuses on the provision of information to meet the requirements of the syllabi. And thus, there is little room for teachers to choose or design based on different needs or abilities of students. Such approach has been in the dominant place in most Chinese schools and colleges, and it undermines students' ability of engaging in autonomous learning. Thus, an applicable teaching method before the class is necessary and critical in today's Chinese university classrooms.

2. Background

The average score of of the participating students in their College Entrance Examinations is 84 points(out of 150). After the first semester, the average mark of students in the final examination is below 70, with only 15(out of 130) students marked above 80 and only half managed to pass the exam. As stated by Lee(2016) in a study, many college students graduate without the ability to apply the information that they supposedly learned, that is because most of them do no engage in class activities and feel the responsibility of learning to be their own.

3. The Pre-teach approach

The Pre-teach approach is an innovative teaching method based on the CELTA training system of the Cambridge Examination Board of UK. It is mainly divided into 2 parts:

1. Anticipate Problems 2. Pre-teach activity

4.1 Anticipating Problems

Student-centered teaching is based on constructivism learning theory that learners confer meanings to what they learn by relating new information to what they have already known(Emaliana I, 2017), so it is vital to consider what students have already acquired before they entered university and plan the lesson accordingly.

The following methods are examples to predict and sort out problems before class to facilitate subsequent teaching activities: 1. Prior-class test. Testing of relevant content before class can intuitively demonstrate students' English ability so that teachers can adjust teaching methods, supplement vocabulary and other tasks. 2. Questionnaire. Compared with quizzes, questionnaires put less pressure on students and thus are more acceptable to them. According to Nichols et al.(2017), by drawing upon students' prior experience when learning, they are

enabled to develop analytical and evaluative skills, which ultimately leads to application of knowledge and even creation of new one.

4.2 Pre-teach activity

According to Bloom's(1956) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, learners must master the lower level objectives before they build up to reach high level objectives (figure 1). The pre-teach section illustrates facts and basic concepts of the knowledge, explain ideas and concepts, and in this way, students are well prepared to apply and analyze the information in the following activities.

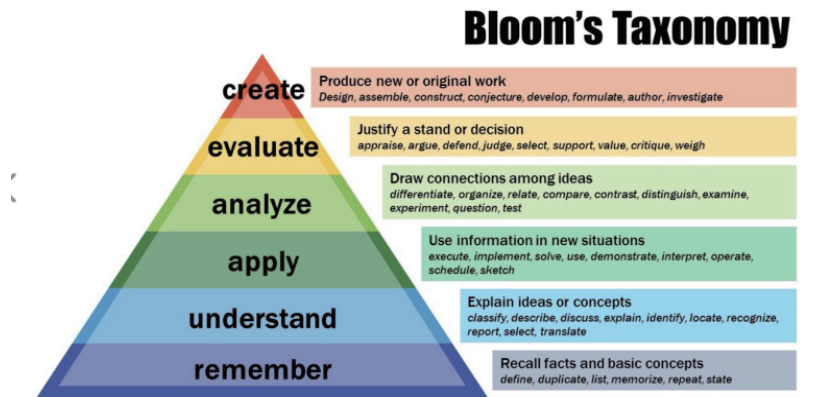


Figure 1. Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives

In order to ensure the course activities going smoothly, some pre-teach is necessary, in which students can better break down language barriers, grasp the language context, and participate in classroom activities. The teacher can introduce a lead-in session or use various sensory auxiliary activities, including but not limited to audio and video media (audio/visual), physical display assistance (touch/taste), to help increase the fun of the activities. In addition, competitions, guessing games and other activities can also stimulate students' desire to win and supplement the leading knowledge of this lesson.

4.3 Outcome

In this study 130 students were put into 4 class and after 1 year experiencing pre-teach, the learning experience evaluation scores of students participated were greatly improved, reaching about 98%(figure 2). In Tyma's(2009) experience with a media literacy class, many desirable outcomes, which would not have been achieved if the teacher remained center of the class, were achieved, as he shifted the decision-making in the class to empower the students and let them decide what they wanted out of the class. In addition, the positive rating of learning experience increased from 75% to 85% in Kennedy(2009)'s research.

[evaluate my questionnaire/ view details](#)

College English I [Survey result](#)

Year 2023–2024 Student Learning Experience Questionnaire

Evaluate rate: **97.69%** Number of participants: **127** Score: **97.93**

Figure 2. Teaching evaluation survey; source: questionnaires

Conclusion

A student-centered class is one carefully designed to predict students' needs, promote learning, and offer opportunities to acquire many other important skills. It is the aim of this essay to inspire more college teachers to become student-centered, to put the pedagogical literature into practice in their teaching. However, this method is now only experimented with 130 students and lack of more continuous result and

data. In addition, the student-centered method could lead to placing learning mandate entirely to students and eventually lose control of the classroom (Muganga L and Ssenkusu P, 2019). This approach may have different effects on students of different level, which is another aspect needing consideration when teachers use it.

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