

The Implementation of PADD Class Utilizing Block-based Dual Text in English Instruction for Higher Vocational Education

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Abstract: Once adapted to local conditions and suitable for our country, the new teaching paradigm of PADD classes has been widely adopted by colleges and universities across various disciplines. Given the extant issues in English instruction at higher vocational institutions, this paper proposes a "block-based dual text" approach to teaching English and delineates its specific implementation within such contexts, thereby offering novel insights for enhancing English pedagogy at vocational colleges and even advancing foreign language education reform across China.

Key words: Block-based dual text; PADD class; Vocational college English teaching

1. Current Challenges in English Language Teaching in Higher Vocational Colleges

1.1 The students' English proficiency is hindered by a weak foundation and a lack of interest in language acquisition.

The majority of students in vocational colleges are admitted after failing the college entrance examination, and many of them have weak foundations in English learning. During their middle school years, they failed to develop good study habits, lacked proper learning methods, and did not recognize the sense of achievement that comes with learning. As a result, these students lack enthusiasm for learning English and exhibit a lack of initiative and consciousness. Additionally, they are prone to classroom distractions and exhibit a limited attention span. Furthermore, the majority of English teaching materials are geared towards more advanced learners, resulting in accelerated instruction that can diminish students' motivation to learn the language.

1.2 The pedagogical approach is outdated and heavily reliant on didactic instruction.

The majority of English classes in higher vocational colleges still adhere to a teacher-centered approach, with instructors often resorting to spoon-feeding lectures due to students' weak foundations. This unconscious fear of student comprehension and retention perpetuates the cycle of passive learning and inhibits the development of critical thinking skills. Therefore, they endeavor to augment their knowledge by providing comprehensive explanations. Vocational College English is a fundamental public course that encompasses all college freshmen, with the aim of covering eight units of teaching content through four weekly classes. Despite extensive teaching tasks and limited class hours, effective instruction remains the primary focus. Moreover, time and energy constraints often hinder teachers from engaging in professional development and exploring innovative approaches to English instruction, perpetuating the prevalence of outdated teaching practices.

1.3 The conventional teaching concepts have yielded an unsatisfactory educational outcome.

Currently, English instruction in higher vocational colleges is organized around thematic units to facilitate the comprehensive development of students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Teachers frequently incorporate authentic materials from textbooks to enhance their language proficiency. In the process of text analysis, a complex interplay of linguistic elements including vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension is employed to provide comprehensive explanations. However, the lack of a clear structure or guidelines renders this approach unfocused and overwhelming, with multiple points of knowledge being presented simultaneously. Moreover, the current English teaching methodologies, including translation method, direct method, communicative teaching approach, listening and speaking technique etc., which are based on linguistics and cognitive psychology, tend to be either too broad or insufficiently comprehensive in guiding pedagogical practices. Consequently, effective instruction in vocabulary acquisition as well as spoken language and listening skills is often lacking.

1.4 Effective learning cannot be achieved with the current class size unless stratified teaching is implemented.

With the growing enrollment in traditional colleges and universities, there exists a dearth of English instructors, limited instructional space, and a relatively high number of courses. Moreover, stratified teaching is not commonly implemented in most higher vocational colleges, resulting in students of varying English proficiency levels being placed together in the same class. While some students have attained a high level of English proficiency and can pass CET-4 at an undergraduate level, others may not have studied English since their foreign language was Japanese or German. There exists a discrepancy in the English proficiency levels of students, ranging from that of junior high school to first-year senior high school. This incongruity between student aptitude and language ability presents significant challenges for effective instruction in English.

2. The pedagogy of "block-based dual text" for foreign language instruction in PADD classrooms

2.1 PADD class

(1) Introduction to PADD class

Proposed in 2014 by Professor Zhang Xuexin, a Shanghai-based Oriental scholar from Fudan University and an expert in brain science and psychology, the PADD class represents a novel teaching paradigm for China's education system. Due to its scientific rigor, universal applicability, and ease of implementation, this approach has garnered significant attention within the industry. Comprising four components - teachers' teaching (Presentation), students' study (Assimilation), group discussions (Discussion), and teacher Q&A sessions (Dialogue) - it offers a comprehensive learning experience. Based on the concept of "right and responsibility to division", the sub-class integrates four

learning theories - behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, and humanism - using a four-element teaching principle that combines Chinese and Western approaches to stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning. This approach also frees teachers from heavy mechanical labor while enhancing their career accomplishments with good teaching effects.. Truly implementing the concept of advanced education centered on students and realizing the fundamental goal of being student-oriented while led by teachers.

(2)The salutary impact of segregated classes on the pedagogy of English in higher vocational institutions

Language acquisition involves both input and output, particularly in the context of foreign language instruction at vocational colleges. It is crucial to provide students with ample opportunities to practice their foreign language thinking patterns and linguistic expression. Throughout the learning process, teachers must offer accurate guidance, supervise students' effective learning progress, and facilitate metacognitive development.. In the presentation, teachers allocate only a portion of class time to carefully instruct students while dedicating the remaining time for independent exploration, communication and discussion. This approach enables teachers to effectively evaluate student learning outcomes within limited class time.During group discussions, the teacher can assess students' mastery of knowledge and identify areas for improvement in both knowledge and skills. Targeted answers to questions raised during these discussions can be provided, avoiding the time-consuming and inefficient practice of answering individual student questions one by one in a traditional classroom setting. As the PADD class allocates time for individual thinking and studying, the prepared discussions foster active and enthusiastic participation from students, thereby enhancing their critical thinking and communication skills while deepening their understanding of relevant knowledge. It is worth noting that the PADD class demands higher teaching proficiency from instructors, who must efficiently deliver instruction.

2.2 Teaching English through block-based dual text."

(1) The decomposition of modular design capability

The new English Curriculum Standards for Higher Vocational Colleges stipulate that English teaching should aim to foster students' language skills, knowledge, affective domain, learning strategies and communicative competence.

Different regions of the brain are responsible for distinct functions, and only through targeted tasks and consistent training can we modify neural connections in the brain to effectively enhance corresponding language cognitive abilities. Therefore, it is essential to deconstruct language ability into specific components and utilize similar linguistic materials for specialized training.The teaching content is categorized into seven distinct parts, including reading, vocabulary, grammar, translation, writing, listening and speaking. Each segment has a well-defined and specific proficiency objective along with its corresponding pedagogical process. The modular design facilitates the segregation of listening and speaking as well as the separation of vocabulary, grammar and reading. Furthermore, it offers an extensive range of high-quality systematic teaching materials for teachers to flexibly select based on learning conditions to better adapt.

(2) Teaching with dual text in the classroom: A pedagogical approach for enhancing language learning

By achieving a clear separation between teaching and learning, the balance between the two is attained. The course content adheres to the divided classroom model, which is reflected in the specially designed "dual text" or "parallel text" format for language instruction based on principles of brain science transfer, and integrated with a four-element teaching process: Each unit is accompanied by two parallel texts, A and B. Text A is presented by the teacher while students independently study text B, followed by group discussions to enhance comprehension. Finally, teachers provide clarification and guidance through answering questions and summarizing key points.

3. The Application of PADD Class in English Teaching for Higher Vocational Colleges

To offer innovative ideas for the reform of English teaching in higher vocational colleges, the author presents examples of divided class teaching strategies, specifically focusing on the expanding English grammar section for sophomores and public English vocabulary section for freshmen at Henan Judicial Police Vocational College

3.1 The grammar section is taught in class using a dual-text approach

Taking the grammar section of the "Expanding English" course in sophomore year as an example, the instruction is delivered offline with a duration of 40 minutes and supported by the "division and ease" platform as an auxiliary teaching tool. Prior to class, students are divided into four groups based on their seating arrangement to facilitate discussion.

(1)Teaching presentation session

The instructor employs courseware to explicate attributive clauses through the use of illustrative sentences, with a duration of 20 minutes for explanation and an additional 15 minutes dedicated to addressing salient and challenging aspects as well as common errors. A mind map is utilized to disambiguate the grammatical context and provide a concise summary of key points.

(2) Assimilation session

The teacher allocates 6 minutes for students to reflect and complete homework. Initially, the teacher spends 3 minutes answering grammar questions related to 10 representative attributive clauses uploaded in the "test" column of the "FYI" platform while reflecting on them. Subsequently, within a span of 3 minutes, students write down what they have learned and their areas of confusion based on their mistakes and feedback from knowledge comprehension.

(3) Discussion session

The teacher allocates 8 minutes for students to discuss incorrect questions in the "test" on the separation platform, share their learning experiences and opinions, as well as identify problems that need to be addressed. The teacher is responsible for timekeeping and monitoring group discussions by walking around the classroom. To avoid language barriers hindering normal discussion, the entire process is conducted in Chinese. Each group will submit their queries to the "discussion area".

(4) Dialogue session

Utilize the final six minutes to engage in whole-class communication, during which time the teacher will address questions posed by the group individually. As these inquiries are located within the "discussion area" of our division platform, instructors can swiftly identify common issues and personality traits among students while also integrating their strengths and weaknesses to provide targeted responses that save both time and enhance efficiency.

3.2 The incorporation of a "dual text" to the vocabulary section during class instruction.

Given the freshmen's weak foundational grasp of English, it is imperative to provide them with an effective approach to word recitation at the onset of the semester. In accordance with linguistic principles, this study proposes a teaching method that emphasizes progressive pronunciation, form and meaning acquisition for vocabulary, called Phonology-Orthography-Semantic Ascending Motherhood(POSA).

(1) The first round of matching:

Presentation session: Select more than half of the words for focused explanation, while assigning easier words to students. Emphasize pronunciation and provide opportunities for reading and writing practice, disregarding parts of speech and semantics."

Assimilation session: Students tend to overlook the aspects of grammar and semantics, focusing solely on phonetic symbols to read aloud and relying on sound patterns to guide their pronunciation of words.

Dialogue session: The teacher employs the class's random question function to assess students' word recognition and correct pronunciation errors. Each unit's words may be read up to three times, with group dictation employed if time is limited.

(2) The second round of dictation:

Presentation Session:

Select a few representative words and discuss their usage, as well as two additional words that involve affixes and roots. Teach students to identify parts of speech based on pronunciation and affixes. Using the aforementioned examples, instructors should explain etymology, word meaning, and usage while guiding students in identifying affixes and determining parts of speech through them. Additionally, teachers should clarify sentence components by explaining the parts of speech within sentences using example sentences.

Solo study: Similarly, students are self-taught in acquiring the remaining vocabulary."

Discussion: Rephrase the sentence to discuss the word's grammatical classification, affixation, semantic meaning, and other relevant linguistic features

Dialogue: Word explanations provided by students, demonstrations conducted, and teacher comments summarized in conclusion..

4. Conclusion

In the classroom, following the teacher's instruction, students engage in independent learning and homework to identify their own challenges and difficulties. They then participate in group discussions to address these issues, digest personality problems within the group, and compile common problems for further assistance from the teacher. The teacher's precise and comprehensive responses effectively resolve student concerns while deepening their understanding of course material.. Through collaborative discussions and teacher-led question-and-answer sessions, students receive valuable feedback from both their peers and instructors, resulting in a significant improvement in learning efficiency while also alleviating the teaching burden on educators. Moreover, as students acquire knowledge, they also develop their logical and critical thinking skills. Through discussions with peers, they can experience the joy of helping others and being helped in return, which fosters self-esteem and confidence - two crucial emotional factors that vocational college students require.

The accurate and reasonable block design effectively breaks down complex language abilities into specialized skills, laying the foundation for standardized, unified, scientific, and efficient teaching activities. Incorporating profound principles of language cognition, novel ideas and methods have been integrated into teaching activities across all sections. These approaches are characterized by their simplicity and clarity in practice, facilitating ease of comprehension for educators and mastery for students alike, while also promoting self-study.

In summary, the PADD class model based on block-based dual text aligns more closely with the demands of foreign language teaching and modern vocational education in China. To advance foreign language instruction in vocational education, we must update our professional educational approach and actively leverage PADD class to drive reform and development.

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This paper is a product of the research outcomes from the 2022 Provincial Education Reform Project (Project No.: 2021SJGLX785) and the 2021 Education and Teaching Reform Research and Practice Project at Henan Judicial Police Vocational College, titled "Innovative Pathways and Models for Enhancing Foreign Language Curriculum Quality in Vocational Colleges.