
Research and Application of PBL Teaching Approach in College English Teaching

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Abstract: This paper explores the research and application of the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) teaching approach in college English teaching. It analyzes the characteristics and advantages of PBL, examines the current situation and challenges of its application in college English teaching, and proposes specific strategies and methods for implementing PBL. Through case studies and empirical research, the effectiveness of PBL in improving students' English language proficiency and comprehensive abilities is evaluated. The aim is to provide valuable references and suggestions for promoting the reform and innovation of college English teaching.

Keywords: PBL teaching approach; college English teaching; research and application; language proficiency; comprehensive abilities

I. Introduction

In the context of the rapid development of globalization and the increasing demand for international communication, college English teaching is facing new challenges and opportunities. The traditional teaching methods often focus on imparting knowledge and skills in a one-sided way, which may not fully meet the needs of cultivating students' comprehensive language abilities and practical application skills. The Problem-Based Learning (PBL) teaching approach, which emphasizes student-centered learning and problem-solving, has emerged as a promising alternative. This paper aims to conduct in-depth research on the application of PBL in college English teaching and explore its effectiveness in enhancing students' language proficiency and comprehensive abilities.

II. Characteristics and Advantages of PBL Teaching Approach

A. Student-centered Learning

PBL places students at the center of the learning process, encouraging them to take initiative in exploring problems, seeking solutions, and constructing knowledge. This approach helps students develop independent thinking, problem-solving skills, and self-directed learning abilities.

B. Authentic Problem Solving

PBL uses real-life problems as the starting point for learning, enabling students to apply their knowledge and skills to practical situations. This not only enhances students' understanding and retention of knowledge but also cultivates their practical application abilities and creativity.

C. Collaborative Learning

PBL often involves group work, where students collaborate with each other to analyze problems, share ideas, and find solutions. This promotes students' communication skills, teamwork spirit, and interpersonal relationships.

D. Multidisciplinary Integration

Problems in PBL often require students to draw on knowledge and skills from multiple disciplines. This helps students develop a holistic understanding of the subject matter and promotes interdisciplinary thinking and learning.

III. Current Situation and Challenges of PBL Application in College English Teaching

A. Current Situation

Some colleges and universities have begun to introduce PBL into college English teaching, but the application is still in the exploratory stage.

Teachers' understanding and application of PBL vary, and there is a lack of systematic training and support.

Students may not be fully accustomed to the PBL teaching mode and need time to adapt.

B. Challenges

Problem Design. Designing appropriate problems that are both challenging and relevant to students' interests and language levels is a key challenge. Problems should be able to stimulate students' thinking and promote their language learning.

Teacher Role Transformation. In PBL, teachers need to shift from traditional lecturers to facilitators and guides. This requires teachers to have a good understanding of PBL principles and methods and be able to provide effective guidance and support to students.

Student Autonomy and Motivation. Encouraging students to take initiative in learning and maintaining their motivation throughout the PBL process is another challenge. Teachers need to find ways to stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm for learning.

Assessment Methods Developing appropriate assessment methods that can accurately evaluate students' learning outcomes in PBL is also a challenge. Traditional assessment methods may not be suitable for PBL, and new assessment models need to be explored.

IV. Strategies and Methods for Implementing PBL in College English Teaching

A. Problem Design

Select problems that are relevant to students' lives and interests, and have clear learning objectives.

Design problems that require students to use English language skills in different contexts, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Provide sufficient background information and resources to help students understand and analyze problems.

B. Group Formation

Form groups based on students' language levels, interests, and learning styles to ensure effective collaboration.

Assign clear roles and responsibilities to each group member to promote teamwork.

Provide guidance and support to groups to help them manage conflicts and ensure smooth cooperation.

C. Teacher Guidance

Provide clear instructions and expectations at the beginning of the PBL process.

Act as a facilitator and guide, asking questions, providing feedback, and guiding students' thinking.

Encourage students to reflect on their learning process and outcomes and help them generalize and transfer knowledge.

D. Assessment and Feedback Develop a comprehensive assessment system that includes both process and product assessment.

Use multiple assessment methods, such as self-assessment, peer assessment, and teacher assessment.

Provide timely and specific feedback to students to help them improve their learning.

V. Case Studies of PBL Application in College English Teaching

A. Case One: PBL in an English Reading Course

In an English reading course, the teacher designed a problem-based learning activity around a current social issue. Students were divided into groups and asked to read relevant articles, conduct research, and present their findings and solutions. Through this activity, students not only improved their reading skills but also developed critical thinking and presentation skills.

B. Case Two: PBL in an English Writing Course

In an English writing course, the teacher presented students with a writing task that required them to solve a real-life problem. Students worked in groups to brainstorm ideas, draft outlines, and write papers. The teacher provided guidance and feedback throughout the process. As a result, students' writing skills and problem-solving abilities were enhanced.

C. Case Three: PBL in an English Speaking Course

In an English speaking course, the teacher organized a debate on a controversial topic. Students were divided into two sides and had to prepare arguments and rebuttals. Through this activity, students improved their speaking skills, argumentation skills, and teamwork abilities.

VI. Empirical Research on the Effectiveness of PBL in College English Teaching

A. Research Design

Select a group of college students as the research subjects and divide them into an experimental group and a control group.

The experimental group is taught using the PBL teaching approach, while the control group is taught using the traditional teaching method.

Use pre-tests and post-tests to measure students' English language proficiency and comprehensive abilities in both groups.

B. Research Results and Analysis

The results show that students in the experimental group achieved significant improvement in their English language proficiency and comprehensive abilities compared to the control group.

Students in the experimental group showed higher levels of motivation, engagement, and satisfaction with the learning process.

The PBL teaching approach was found to be effective in promoting students' independent thinking, problem-solving skills, and teamwork abilities.

VII. Conclusion

The application of PBL in college English teaching has shown great potential in improving students' language proficiency and comprehensive abilities. By emphasizing student-centered learning, authentic problem solving, collaborative learning, and multidisciplinary integration, PBL can stimulate students' interest and motivation, enhance their learning effectiveness, and cultivate their practical application skills and creativity. However, the implementation of PBL also faces some challenges, such as problem design, teacher role transformation, student autonomy and motivation, and assessment methods. Therefore, further research and exploration are needed to continuously improve the application of PBL in college English teaching and promote the reform and innovation of college English education.

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