

How to Cultivate Students' Thinking Quality by Using English Learning Activities in Senior High School

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Abstract

The new curriculum reform requires teachers to carefully design learning activities based on the cultivation of students' key competence, enrich education and teaching content, and enhance the attractiveness of classroom teaching to students. Learn how to design efficient activities can help us develop students' key competence especially thinking quality more efficiently. However, still now so many activities are designed in improperly. The main purpose of this paper is to identify what are the current problems of the activities design and find out the basic principles which teachers can follow when designing the activities to cultivate students' thinking quality effectively like create learner-centeredness environment in activities, the design of learning activities should show diversity, connect the activities and apply them hierarchically, create contextualized situations and motivate students' engagement.

Keywords

Thinking Quality; Learning Activity; Key Competence.

1. Introduction

1.1. Formulating the Question

The English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools (2017 Edition) (hereinafter referred to as the Curriculum Standards) clearly states that "English learning activities are the basic organizational form of classroom teaching and the main way to implement the curriculum objectives." (Ministry of Education, 2018). And the Curriculum Standards advocates the activity-based language teaching, which states that the teachers should design the activities properly and scientifically and help to improve students' key competence by using these activities. Thus learning how to design a good activity becomes more and more important. According to Guo Baoxian, teachers should understand the basic elements of classroom activities, design and organize classroom activities from the aspects of activity objectives, types, levels, forms and so on, so that classroom activities can promote each other and really improve students' comprehensive language ability (Guo Baoxian, 2015). However, the activities used in today's language learning class still exist many deficiencies.

1.2. Purposes and Significance of the Study

The thinking quality is one of the most important objectives to develop in our English learning classes while the key link of the class is the applying of the learning activities. Thus, in order to develop the students' key competence, in order to develop students' thinking quality, and in order to achieve an efficient learning we us teachers must need to know what efficiencies exist in our learning activities and how to design good activities to help students learn efficiently.

2. Problem Identification

2.1. The Type of Activity is Monotonous

The activities of language learning can be divided into different types according to different standards. According to the degree of control the activities can be divided into controlled activities, semi-controlled activities and communicative activities in speaking class. During most speaking classes, teachers are more likely to design the controlled activities and semi-controlled activities because they thought they can easily manage the class in these kinds of activities. However, both of these two activities cannot achieve the fluency of speaking efficiently.

2.2. Students are Lack of Subjectivity in Activities

According to the study of Jiao Maohua, another severe problem exist in our activity designing is that the teachers design the learning activities mainly based on the textbooks and teachers more plays the role to teach the new words, teach test points and teach textbooks instead of teaching with the textbooks. In this kind of class, students are more learned by leading. The teachers talk more than students in class and what students learned are what the teachers taught in class. They are lack of the opportunities to think, to analyze and to criticize and their thinking quality cannot be improved.

2.3. The Interaction of Students in the Activity is Poor

When students are engaged in the class they can more interested in class and more willing to learn autonomously. One typical activity in class is questioning. Know how to question effective does an important role in one class. However, during the precious classes, most parts of questions are asked by teachers and answered by the whole class or one student. Few opportunities are provided to students to ask their partners and teachers. The involvement and engagement of students are far away to the ideal situation.

2.4. There is not Enough Depth of Thinking About the Text in the Activity

Huang Yuanzhen and Lan Chunshou(2014) put forward the linguistic innovation thinking structure and clearly analyzed the content of "3C thinking", namely classify, contradict and connect, which correspond to the three stages of thinking: logical thinking, critical thinking and creative thinking. And according to the structure, the knowledge should by learned from classifying to contradicting and to connecting which in other words from the level of thinking from the low to the high. However, during most classes, the activities are more designed to develop students' low level thinking ability.

3. Measures Taken to Improve Students' Thinking Quality in Activities

3.1. The Design of Learning Activities Should Show Diversity

Each kind of activities are aim at different purposes. For example. The controlled activities are mainly used to achieve the accuracy of language production while the communicative activities are mainly used to achieve the fluency of language production. Thus if we aim to achieve students' overall development or in other words the development of key competence we need to use the kinds of activities as much as possible instead of just being monotonous.

3.2. Create Learner-Centeredness Environment

In order to achieve students' subjectivity in activities, we as teachers should bear in mind the concept "learner-centeredness" and try to put it into practice. Firstly, when we design the activities, we should leave more roles for students to play and more rooms for students to think. Secondly, teachers should play the role as facilitators instead of controllers during the class.

Teachers should scaffold students to accomplish the activities. What's more, teachers should not do all the talk during the class but leave the chances for students to express their ideas.

3.3. Create Contextualized Situations and Motivate Students' Engagement

According to Xu Ailing, due to the differences between target language culture and local culture, many obstacles are formed. (2020) They are also afraid of being engaged in the classes. Teachers should create English situations for students, be good at using question situations, and gradually let students under the guidance of questions, form the deepening of English culture and continuous association of their own thinking ability, and stimulate students to think independently.

3.4. Connect the Activities and Apply Them Hierarchically

Sun Ming stated that learning activities should be interesting, targeted, pragmatic, hierarchical and nurturing. (2020) Teachers need to design learning activities to conform to the laws of students' cognitive development and language learning step by step, to help the students master the knowledge of active based on cognizing, understanding, and constructing new knowledge, which can not only make it rich and perfect the original cognitive structure, and make it easy, step by step to learn new knowledge, enjoy the pleasure of success.

4. Conclusion

In the process of comprehensively promoting the reform of senior middle school English teaching, the mobilization of students' subjective initiative should not be ignored. Teachers should be aware of the necessity and important value of cultivating students' key competence, and understand students' learning initiative based on the reasonable design and careful arrangement of English classroom activities. At the same time, teachers should understand the real ideas and demands of students to ensure the smooth development of teaching activities and comprehensively improve the efficiency of the use of educational resources. In this way, the thinking quality of students can be cultivated.

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