

The Pros and Cons of Multimedia Teaching in English Classes

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Abstract: With the rapid development of computer technology, multimedia teaching has enter classroom and become essential for English teachers. And the multimedia teaching is one of the teaching methods that teachers apply the modern teaching media according to the teaching aims and teaching objects. The paper mainly focuses on the pros and cons of multimedia teaching and ponders on its weaknesses, and research discovered that multimedia teaching has the following advantages: Meeting the requirements of the New Curriculum Reform and optimize the traditional teaching mode, having sufficient teaching materials and develop innovative thinking, optimizing the teaching method and stimulate the students' interest and potential. However, it also bears the following disadvantages: Unbalancing teaching capacity and students may difficult to absorb, restricting students' logic thinking and creative consciousness, avoiding the position of teacher-student role and harmful to classroom interactivity. Comparing the pros and cons of multimedia teaching in English classes. this paper gives some related solutions from teachers, students and local governments' part to achieve the aims of avoiding its cons and promoting its pros and serving for the English teaching.

Keywords: Multimedia technology; Inspire; Time-saving; Creative thinking; Efficiency

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of computer technology and its application in the school teaching since 1990s', multimedia teaching has been acquainted and accepted by more and more people and it can be regarded as an important symbol in the educational modernization. A great man once said human beings will welcome a technological revolution which is bigger than printing, telephone and television because of multimedia technology. And now, it seems that he was absolutely right! Multimedia technology is used everywhere, not only in medical care, traveling, commercial advertising, but in education area, that is the multimedia teaching---a kind of teaching mode based on multimedia technology which is digital and variety. When using multimedia teaching, teachers will design the courseware which is equipped with music, pictures and then presented by computer. By this, students can learn from teachers, courseware or on the internet by themselves, while the teachers need to choose the material carefully and reasonably. Meanwhile, multimedia teaching changes the traditional teaching way like chalk plus blackboard, in the traditional class, teachers speak all the class, students can only listen to their speaking and imagine what their teachers are talking about. On the contrary, the newly multimedia teaching will not only benefit the teachers for their health but also improve the teaching efficiency, inspire students' interest and advance the teaching effect. However, multimedia teaching was widely used but it also has its disadvantages. What we can do is to avoid its disadvantages and carry forward its advantages. For doing this, we firstly need to recognize the pros and cons of multimedia teaching and then adopt the multimedia teaching at its top.

2. Advantages of Multimedia Teaching

2.1 Meeting the requirements of the New Curriculum Reform and optimize the traditional teaching mode

The traditional teaching is a kind of teaching method which is based on a book, chalk and blackboard, while teachers play as the key role during the whole process. According to the teacher-centered traditional ways represented by Herbart, in order to achieve the aim of standardized personality and open the ignorance, teachers has built an absolute teaching-learning relationship. teachers are regarded as the absolute authority, student plays as the worshiper and they obey the teachers' instruction completely without any other thinking^[1]. Under this kind of teaching way, command and inculcation has become the only principle during the teaching process. Teaching and learning processes is filled with the conflict of force and obey, give and refuse, violence and revolt^[2]. Besides, teachers only explain the book knowledge word by word and when they write on the blackboard, it is somewhat time-consuming and students' attention maybe diverted, so the teaching effect may not be that well. However, multimedia teaching appears and it has changed the traditional teaching. As we all know that, multimedia teaching

adapt to the current new curriculum reform and optimize the traditional teaching method. When teachers adopt the multimedia teaching, they will design the courseware skillfully and combine with suitable pictures, music and some other reasonable materials, by his way, students can enjoy the learning process and learn more in the class. When I was during my student teaching last year, I tried teaching with computer, on the one hand, I think multimedia teaching can presents the teaching material at its top, by using pictures, animation and interesting dialogues, students will throw themselves into the learning process; on the other hand, my writing ability on the blackboard is quite limited, and I feel that it is not only wastes time but also impact the teaching affect.

2.2 Having sufficient teaching materials and develop innovative thinking

In the traditional teaching, students can only imagine what their teachers are talking about and it is quite difficult and bored. By this kind of teacher-centered method, most of the students are deficiency in innovative spirit and creative ability and they can not adapt to the demands of the 21 century. However, when using multimedia teaching, teachers will search teaching materials as much as possible and presents those in many different and colorful ways, students can watch the courseware and pictures visually. Moreover, it has changed the traditional ways in which students only listen to teachers' explaining, and it can also save the time while teachers need to explain what they are going to talk about. In addition, multimedia teaching also helpful to developing students' innovative thinking. The improving of students' innovative thinking is a core content of current English teaching: it is the Internet that can enlarge students' information source from the textbook to a broader platform and provide students with novel teaching activities and rich information resources^[3]. And, as comrade Jiang Zemin once said innovation is the soul of a nation's progress and the driving force for the prosperity of a country, and also the source of the eternal vitality of a political party. When I teaching the lesson "Cultural Relics", I designed the courseware and decorated with many beautiful pictures and also show students the pictures of the Eight Great Wonders of the World and the beautiful Amber Room. By this I can set scenes by using multimedia teaching and students can use their brains and think actively, and link the language learning with the actual life situation. In this way, students can improve their creative thinking and observe problems in a multi-angle and multi-level way and train their ability of learning and using languages in the context of situation so as to achieve the aim of apply what they have learned^[4].

2.3 Optimizing the teaching method and stimulate the students' interest and potential.

Traditional teaching only pay attention to the memory storage of their knowledge without emphasizing the cultivation of overall quality and creative ability, and that pays more attention to teachers' dominant instead of students' inner subjectivity during the teaching-learning process^[5]. However, teachers should enable the students to learn by themselves as opposed to telling them, if students are forced to learn, their subjectivity and enthusiasm will be restrained; besides, without emphasizing students' personality development, the educated students' knowledge and thought will be the same without personality and creativeness. Yet, multimedia teaching changed the traditional teaching because it can optimize the teaching method and stimulate students' interest and potential. According to one Psychologist's idea all strange, intuitive imagines, flexible incentives or means is easy to arose students' attention, recall their interest and inspire their learning spirit. Multimedia teaching involved in the usual teaching process can grasp students' personality and teachers can adopt meaningful teaching method like vivid pictures, bright colors, proper interpretation and moving sound, teachers can also set an attractive situation to arose students' zeal and inspire their learning interest and thirst for knowledge, so far as to link their learning to the novel and unique entertainment, develop the advantages of teaching for fun and making the boring study meaningful and interesting. And the deep interest and highly centralized attention is the premise of students' mastering knowledge. When I taught the lesson Nelson Mandela---a Modern Hero, I firstly ask students to recognize the great people and the famous people by using pictures and explain the life story of Mandela, after listening to the video tapes, I ask students to answer the questions involved. Students can perform according to the reading materials and then they can foster the knowledge points in a skillful and relaxed way, by this way, we can transfer students' learning attitude from negative to positive and finally classroom efficiency can be improved greatly.

3. Disadvantages of multimedia teaching

3.1 Unbalancing teaching capacity and students may difficult to absorb

Multimedia teaching is a kind of method that teachers design the courseware before the class. And in the teaching process, they just play the courseware according to the scheduled materials which might include all the contents that teachers want to express, by this, they may form the teaching model like teacher-courseware-student, if there is something unexpected happens, teachers will also continue the class in their own way, and this may betray the student-centered teaching thought. And this kind of teaching may go against students' ability of discovering problems and can not reflect teaching flexibility. In my students teaching, when I taught the lesson Nelson Mandela—a modern Hero, I remembered there was a mistake when I finally conclude the teaching materials by PPT, there was a word succeed, which means Elias take the place of Mandela and aims of finishing his last wishes, but few students know the right meaning of the word, I did not realize that and keep on

my class, after class, many students ask me the exact meaning of succeed, thus, I think multimedia teaching is not very good, by playing PPT, teachers may avoid the problems in students and students may feel difficult to learn.

3.2 Restricting students' logic thinking and creative consciousness

Multimedia teaching transfers the teaching materials into the courseware and thus saving the time of writing on the blackboard. It is rightly because of the saved time that killed students' thinking time. And students just receive the knowledge mechanically and lost their learning initiative. In the class, teachers who adopt modern teaching method may just play the PPT without paying much attention to students' reflection, teacher only stress students' watching but shorten their thinking and doing and then avoid the training of students' thinking. Especially for many research or operations, in order to save time, teachers only demonstrate instead of making students' doing. We know that it is a hinder to improve students' operation and problem solving abilities.

3.3 Avoiding the position of teacher-student role and harmful to classroom interactivity

In the multimedia teaching class, teachers are busy at demonstrating the courseware which combines with moving sounds, beautiful pictures and excellent dialogues, and, students all immersed in the perfect courseware, teachers and students just play their roles separately, and this kind of method avoid "students-centered" teaching ways, their teachers just pour all what they have searched to students' mind without thinking about whether they can absorbed. Like me, in the lesson Cultural Relics, I'm busy about playing the beautiful pictures like the Eight Great Wonders in the world, the beautiful vase, and the beautiful Amber Room, etc. students are immersed in the fancy pictures without thinking much about some deep things about the teaching materials, and, by this, multimedia teaching does poorly.

4. Deep thought of multimedia teaching and its future trending.

From my part, Multimedia Teaching as a double-edged sword poses its advantages and disadvantages. And if it uses well, it surely have a bright future. Empowered by the internet, multimedia and modern technology, we are now more flexible in displaying our input and recording our learners' performance in and out of class. Both learners and teachers can easily access more authentic language resources. But we find that the old problems still remain. You still feel that our work does not guarantee a good return though we have tried our best to play the facilitator's role in class, to stand behind our students, to give them more opportunities in class, to let them decide what they want to do, and so on, we feel that our students do not seem to understand our efforts, and we still feel dissatisfied with our teaching result Therefore, I'm going to propose several points to optimize the multimedia teaching.

4.1 Considering from teachers' part

For teachers, they should regulate and control the teaching volume properly and then improve the English teaching effect. For this point, teachers should design the courseware reasonably and choose the teaching materials skillfully. Teachers need to improve themselves academically and change the traditional teaching ways based on a teacher, a blackboard and chalks. However, they can not abandon the traditional teaching completely since traditional way has its unique advantages. A good way for them is to combine the traditional teaching with the multimedia teaching, if you are going to teach the warming up part, it is good to show some pictures and related knowledge to arouse their learning interests, for it will be get twofold result with half effort.

4.2 Considering from students' part

"Interest is the best teacher". We know that teacher is only a leader, a man who lead you, teach you and explain something to you. We need to insist that students occupy the key role in the teaching-learning process. They need to learn the knowledge forwardly and think actively and cooperate with teachers on their own. However, courseware as a computer-aided software, its application should aims at achieving the final teaching purpose and teachers should not pay much attention to its form instead of the details. Only by the perfect combination of its form and details should we achieve the purpose of teaching knowledge, mobilize students' enthusiasm and improving the teaching environment.

4.3 Considering from local government's part

Local government needs to increase the funds input of multimedia teaching. In many rural parts, the teaching equipment is poor and most of the cases, teachers have no condition to practice the multimedia teaching though modern teaching did possess its unique advantages. Because of the backward of hardware equipment, teachers' teaching ability unable to keep pace with the modern teaching and then, multimedia teaching is only a dream in many rural places.

Besides, it is also something about the skill training. We know that many teachers are not good at designing courseware and low quality PPT will surely influence the teaching result. Teaching idea is always adapt to the teaching behaviors. Therefore, to enhance teachers' teaching method and multimedia training and their overall ability timely are quite needed. However, everything has its limit, even if teachers know well about the multimedia skills, they should not depend on it all the time. In the practice, we should stick to the principle of "teacher-dominant,

student-subjectivity”, teacher themselves should integrate their advanced teaching ideas, teaching experience and teaching methods to the multimedia teaching so as to produce the best possible result. Only by this way, multimedia teaching will not descend to a decoration.

In my opinion, there exists a possibility for everything, multimedia teaching is no exception. It has the pros that traditional teaching can not compare. With time passes, multimedia teaching will gain more and more popular. And, as you may see, Internet teaching nowadays is widely accepted. With the vigorous development of information based engineering, Internet Teaching get further development and become an important form of future education. Meanwhile, traditional teaching challenged by the modern method will be eliminated gradually. The multimedia teaching under the new mechanism represents the new trend and forms its shapes: the modern teaching activity is a composed process which includes teaching, demonstrating, analyzing, discussing, observing, testing and practicing. By this, teachers publishes the courseware on the internet so we can download and scan freely. Students can also learn the difficult point over and over again, or they can also have on-line consulting. By this way, multimedia teaching is useful and it is a new teaching pattern.

5. Conclusion

Above all, information technology combined with English technical optimizes the classroom teaching, and the application of multimedia teaching can place students into a harmonious environment and make them understanding, operating and applying language in a certain environment. When facing a new thing, we need to have the zeal to embrace it; meanwhile, we need also a calm mind. By this, we can create a better living environment for modern teaching and produce its original effect in the virtuous progress.

Thus, in the English classes, if we can use the multimedia technology properly and reasonably----to combine the traditional teaching and the modern teaching properly. In modern time, it is true that we need to eliminate all the old things, but we cannot deny the traditional teaching completely since it surely has its advantages and multimedia teaching also posses disadvantages.

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