

A Study of University Students' Learning Models Based on the Perspective of Organization Development

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Abstract

The purpose of this essay is to improve Chinese university students' learning models under the background of Novel Coronavirus at Chinese universities. As the fast speed of News Media, most of university teachers use some technological teaching facilities to change the traditional teaching methods and use the student-centered ways so as to change and improve students' learning models in the Comprehensive English class.

Keywords

Leaning models, University students and teachers, Teaching methods.

1. Introduction

As the popularization of Chinese higher education is growing, the fierce competition of getting the most talented students at the source and a wide propaganda war for enrolling superior students has begun among universities. This forces universities to improve their quality. How universities are supposed to grow, develop and survive in such tough competition is such an important issue for faculties and teachers. All faculty members need to change their conventional ways of thinking, as well as to effectively reform the teaching management system. Considering such effects of changes in the socio-technical system, conventional teaching and learning approaches should be changed so that performance can be improved. The ways could be satisfied by all stakeholders, including students, teachers, administrators, leaders and the talent markets. As for changes in the socio-technical systems, leaders, specialized teachers and students have increasing demands and needs to adapt themselves for the improvement of the society. Therefore, Organization Development (OD) does not only help them to address the continuous change effectively and successfully, but it also transfers the organization into the planned development and reinforcement of the strategies. The final goal of OD is to improve the overall effectiveness. OD also focuses on helping people to gain the skills and knowledge by involving the activities in the change process (Cummings & Worley, 2009).

Combined with the theory of OD and the L2 teaching and learning in universities, student learning effectiveness is emphasized. As for this reason, university teachers have highlighted the student-centered learning in these years and its main goal is to develop well-rounded students.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Organization Development and Culture

Generally speaking, organization development (OD) is the study of an effort-planned, organization-wide, managed from the top level so as to achieve organizational effectiveness and develop a well-rounded way, which includes the designed interventions during the organization process by applying the related behavioral-science essence (Beckhard, 1969). As Cummings and Worley (2009) reckon, OD is a behavioral science knowledge that is applied to achieve organizational change by improving its strategies, culture, structure and processes.

What's more, Bennis (1969) states that OD is an action to change organization's values, beliefs, attitudes, goals and structure so that an organization can effectively adapt to the rapid change of globalization, technologies and demanding challenges.

Meanwhile, Schein (1996) maintains that there are three different cultures among its subculture in each organization. Every organization develops its "internal culture", "operator culture" and "engineering culture". According to Schein (1996), a culture in an organizational learning setting includes a number of basic assumptions about how the world is, and how a group of people share, discuss and identify their perceptions, thoughts, feelings and behavior. As in the classroom teaching and learning, it is a learning community and system. As Senge (1990) states that a learning organization could be a place in which people find out facts and plan how to change them. Organization-wide learning includes two parts: changing in culture and in managerial practice. Schein (1996) supports that one cultural level espouses values that often reflect what a group wants to be and the way want to present it.

2.2. Organization Development and Change

Burke (2011) believes that OD is related to the planned changes, which are accompanied by a phased way of practice. However, Bushe and Marshak (2016) suggest that any planned changes have to deal with a number of forces that influence organizations in thousands ways. Burke (2011) also contends that it is not necessary to change organizational culture. He further elaborates that there are three elements, including values, attitudes and behaviors, which ranks from the most difficult to change to the least difficult change in one organization. Values are viewed as the most difficult ones as they are essential to culture. Goodstein and Burke (1991) reckon that the desired culture should be integrated with the organizational vision in the future and determined the behaviors as the half effort for change. It is also considered as an action of getting beneath the surface by daily behavior to acquire the unspoken and deep structure. Schien (2004) states that the fundamental underlying assumption is the third level of organizational culture.

Organizational culture change begins with diagnosing its desired culture, characteristics and relevant values, and then determine what the main behavior would generate, such as new and desired qualities (Burke, 2011). The second half of culture change, Burke (2011) maintains that organizational members should identify the underlying assumptions on the "way things done around there". Sato, Lucente, Meyer & Mrazek (2010) argue that although OD and change ways are powerful, success depends on how these are suitable for specific situations. That is, it is necessary to design thinking, responsiveness and flexibility to OD and change, which includes intent, principles, discoveries, frameworks and solutions. As Sullivan, Rothwell and Balasi (2013) believe that the nanotechnology, globalization and healthcare lead to the constant change and influence human life, most leads are then eager to use OD interventions to facilitate transformation towards organizational change when they face with the complex and fast. Organizational members could design the thinking cycle in major organizational changes, which could generate significant discoveries. After this, people learn and gain experience design capabilities, such as revising frameworks, principles and refining ways. OD practitioners also should carefully choose models of OD and change and work with design thinking approach, which is the goal of OD and change (Coch & French, 1948).

2.3. Learning Organization

A learning organization, to some extent, is believed to impart knowledge to change and improve itself by using the change intervention, which includes two parts: 1) organization learning that strengthens an organization's well-round capability by mastering and developing knowledge sharing, and 2) knowledge management that emphasizes the knowledge of how it can be used and change the situation (Cummings & Worley, 2009). Both of them are important for the current complex and competitive world because they can be transformed into effective

strategies and enhance an organization's competitive advantage by empowering an organization to use the knowledge effectively and widely. Similarly, O'Keeffe (2002) believes that learning organization is developed from the current organization's improvement, and a sustained competitive advantage is subsequently created.

Moreover, Deshpande and Webster (1989) reckon that the learning organization is made up of organizational culture and climate. It is common for us that culture usually occur in a group or an organization, which can be explained as a set of shared values or assumptions learned by organizational members who can solve the common issues by internal integration and external adaptation (Schein, 2004). If one organization has a strong culture, it may work effectively. As for climate in the learning organization, it refers to how organization implements its culture, structures or processes that can stimulate members to take actions to achieve their common goals (Schein, 2004). Overall, it is critical that culture and climate are the two important elements of an organization as they can generate basic values and beliefs. It is difficult to continue a learning process if there are no suitable patterns or desired behaviors (Day, 1994; Schein, 1990). Hence, these elements should work together in an organization to successfully become the learning organization.

3. Action Research

3.1. Before Organization Development Intervention in the Comprehensive English Class

Regarding action research work, various learning activities are designed to improve students' learning models. They are based on Whole Brain Literacy (WBL)/, Appreciative Inquiry(AI), Kolb's experiential learning cycle and some organization development interventions (ODI). In this study, organization development emphasizes on the learning process. The application of AI/Team Building/Coach/WBL/ Kolb's experiential learning cycle would help students to change their conventional learning modes and use various learning ways that are suitable for each individual and improves their performance in a well-developed way.

Before ODI, measures or actions were based on the requirements of universities and are intended to help students to achieve their overall goals. Students' challenges include a pressure on learning tasks, balancing the learning time for each subject or no confidence in learning English because of weak foundation in academic English learning. The current situations were observed and interviewed by the researcher at colleges.

After diagnosis, the second stage was the planned action. In the first step, data was collected. The researcher analyzed the situation based on the data collected and reflected on the students' behavior and learning process. Also, students' feedback was the important sources in assisting the teacher to modify the teaching processes. All of the planned actions were significant to students, teachers, the department and the whole university.

As for the intervention, the researcher aimed for improving students' learning style and their overall performance by using the approaches of Kolb's experiential learning cycle / AI/ WBL/ coaching/ team building. The learning activities, teaching methods and lesson plans based on these approaches were suited to the students' levels and learning objectives by the help from a coach or the way of team building. The researcher also applied Kolb's learning theories to assess university students' learning style and help them to choose alternative learning approaches to enhance the teaching and learning quality at COL. For example, teachers assigned tasks to illustrate their learning experience so as to exercise their area of concrete experience; students could then describe their feelings, reactions and reflections to achieve the needed reflective observation; and teachers instructed them with concepts, theories and readings related to their experience in the area of abstract conceptualization. The most important point was that

teachers gave them opportunities to assess, apply and test what they had learned in the Comprehensive English class.

3.2. Implemented Organization Development Intervention in the Comprehensive English Class

The action research model regards planned change as a cyclical process that one organization provides research-relevant information and leads the strategies. The result of strategies would then be evaluated and taken into consideration for the further strategy. These cyclical stages of action research need committed effort from organizational members and specialized OD practitioners. Compared with Lewin's planned change model, action research model focuses largely on data collecting and diagnosis conducted before an action plan and application, and elaborative assessment of results after the action is also taken (Cummings & Worley, 2009).

Action research model helps the organization to carry out specific planned change and establish more frameworks that would be applied in other settings. The context of this research is the Comprehensive English class, where the classroom is a practicable and experimental place that the researcher can address the assumptions. The following steps concerning specific action research are described below.

Pre-ODI stage - It begins with a problem identification. At this stage, an executive or important person usually anticipates or finds the problems in the organization and then they would call on the OD practitioners to solve them properly.

The current complex educational environment, traditional teaching methods and passive learning approaches are usually found at most Chinese universities. Also, most of Chinese universities emphasizes on good quality of teaching, advocates the student-centered pedagogy and plans for the future learning for teachers and students. The researcher was the AI/ team building/ coaching/ WBL practitioner who considers the weaknesses and threats as the opportunities for improving students' learning process, and observe the existing situation from positive angles.

After that, "data collection and preliminary diagnosis" were implemented by the researcher. Firstly, specific information was collected, and the reasons of organizational issues and the basic problems were clarified. There were four ways in collecting data, including interviews, observations, questionnaires and organizational performance data. Regarding diagnosis, two sets of questionnaires were used, and a semi-structured interview and direct observations were subsequently conducted.

ODI stage - It is the second phase. Firstly, the "Joint Action Planning" was worked out. The OD consultants and clients reached for a common consensus and discussed on the measurement they would jointly use. It was the beginning stage of Lewin's second step "Movement" when an organization wanted to reach a different quasi-stationary finding. Then, action was taken at this stage, based on an organizational culture, technology, internal and external environment, problems, and the time and cost of the intervention (Cummings & Worley, 2009). The researcher was a teacher who managed the Comprehensive English classroom action research. As aforementioned, since the action research is a cyclical process, the researcher observed students' learning behavior and kept track of learning performance in a continuous process. Meanwhile, classroom and pedagogical reflection were made at the end of each semester. Valuable and resourceful feedback were given for the teaching and learning process from university students. Thus, for the intervention, it aimed to improve students' performance and change their conventional learning style, and enhance the effectiveness of the department, the college and the whole university.

During the ODI stage, there were two areas covered to enhance students' learning moedles, including the classroom teaching interventions and the whole university developmental intervention.

(1) The College Intervention - It mainly used the tools of AI/ team building/ coaching/ WBL/ Kolb's experiential learning cycle. As the approval by universities, these interventions were carried out.

Language teaching was applied in AI/ Team Building/ Coaching/ WBL/ Kolb's experiential learning cycle, which were a general tool that could be used in language instruction (English) and content area instruction (Science, Economics, Literature, etc.). When students mastered the language skills, they also needed to be equipped with the abilities of other contents in the Comprehensive English class. It was the measurements of AI/ Team Building/ Coaching/ WBL/ Kolb's experiential learning cycle that provided opportunities for learners to communicate ideas and generate positive experience. The learning activities and lesson plans applied based on the frameworks of AI/ WBL/ Kolb's experiential learning cycle were in accordance with the teaching objectives and the requirements of the Department of Foreign Language. In particular, the exercise of learning tasks of second language (L2) learning were beneficial for students in acting towards the text, interacting with classmates in practicing English language and identifying the appropriate learning models for themselves.

The application of English learning started with the teacher illustrating the content of the lesson plan and learning activities, then students did the tasks in groups and wrote the answers on the group work sheet. After that, group members came together to share, negotiate and gave feedback to each other, then making reports to achieve the "wholeness" of sharing positive answers and the lesson objectives in the classroom. Also, outside activities concerning lesson content were advocated to make preparations for preferred future and become life-long learning. Several new thinking skills emerged when they learned new lessons and became a part in their thinking process, new concepts were subsequently acquired and applied in authentic situations.

By combining AI/ WBL/ Kolb's experiential learning cycle with Comprehensive English teaching and learning, it was a good opportunity to implement students' learning cycle. Thanks to the function of WBL thinking tool, and the reason of human brain's thinking process flowing and winding, students could fully utilize WBL chart that directed them to the thinking process and reminded them of using whole brain process. With the charts of WBL/ AI/ Experiential learning cycle, individuals freely talked about ideas, immediately inquired issues and generated new thoughts that brought into the "realm of the possible" in the desired future so that the new learning style emerged. Thus, students' various experiences from learning together in the classroom, outside the classroom, including the community, society, and their previous experience, emerged from the chart of WBL were boundless and endless, giving the life to the whole classroom and stimulating the learning process. The ODI activities were created in the framework of WBL as follows.

In the "I-Control" quadrant, reading materials and the traditional lectures were given to students to transmit guidelines or rules that helped them to understand the basic concepts. In the "I-Explore" quadrant, AI questions were designed where learners inquired issues they had explored to broaden the opportunities to build open-ended and varied knowledge or information. Brain-storming was also implemented to help learners to open and create a world of exploration and curiosity. In the "I-Pursue" quadrant, the active experimentation was used to develop and enhance learners' skills to figure out learning strategies and plan for action. Hands-on activities were utilized to develop new learning skills and reflection on new areas of exploration. Group sharing and teacher's guidance with the activities were also carried out to facilitate the flow of other activities. In the "I-Preserve" quadrant, it built a relationship between students and the teacher through group discussion and role plays, where positive story sharing and clarifying of values of good life were beneficial for their learning.

(2) The Whole University Intervention - Based on the illustration of interventions applied in the Comprehensive English classroom, they would also be applicable in other courses and

departments, for example, using the new learning process in those two frameworks, and generating the new learning style. By using this way, it completely improved the qualities of the workshops, seminars, lectures, the department, the college and the whole university in the long term.

Post-ODI stage - It is the third phase, beginning with giving "Feedback to a Key Student or Groups". Generally, the teacher and students tended to have a group work or round-table meeting. By doing this procedure, it was indicated that action research was a cooperative work. The round-table meeting was also called feedback meeting, which was hold by the researcher. The researcher assisted students by analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of one's learning style and gave valuable and helpful suggestions to them. At the same time, the action of "Joint Diagnosis of the problem" were implemented. Teachers had a conference with learners to talk about the feedback and collaboration with each other. For example, the researcher assessed and gave advice of their learning style and performance by responding to interview questions and participating in the questionnaire. The mutual relationship were established by gathering data, collecting relevant information, having a feedback meeting and diagnosis. Finally, the researcher used existing data and showed them to students for validation and further diagnosis. The most important action was that the researcher designed a new learning model for students and educators for improving the effectiveness of the whole organizational.

In this model of action research, the responsibility of the researcher was to cooperate with the students to improve the learning process. The researcher and organization members were co-learners. They were committed to diagnosing the problems, designing the changing activities, carrying out and having an evaluation of them. Each party played their individual work. They also integrated resources with the related theories to change the organization. To be more specific on each party's role, the teachers were responsible of diagnosing students' learning problems, having an intervention and using the expertized diagnostic instruments. Also, organization members then learned from the changing process, refined the change activities, and improved them. Teachers played a good role as a coach who promoted the complex changing organization and learned how to use the appropriate interventional tools (Cummings & Worley, 2009).

4. Conclusion

From this research study, it can be inferred that students and teachers were supposed to recognize the significance of the learning models. Students learning model does not only depend on textbooks and teachers, but they can also pose questions, explore themselves and find new approaches. A new image and positive future can be built. As discussed above, learning is also a holistic process of human adaption, which means human being is associated with the wholeness, not only includes human feelings, thinking, actions and reflection, even more than with these elements. As Confucius said, all learning is relearning, which is consistent with the principle of change. Once change occurs, people and surrounding things will change; hence, knowledge would be never the same and is accompanied with the constant change.

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