

A Theoretical and Practical Study on the Construction of English Writing Case Bank for Postgraduates

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Abstract

Case teaching method refers to the teaching method with case as the core of teacher-student interaction. It is of great necessity and practical significance to introduce case teaching method into English Writing Teaching for postgraduates. The construction of case bank for Postgraduate English Writing Teaching is an effective tool for English Writing Teaching for postgraduates, which integrates the teaching of English writing knowledge and the cultivation of English writing ability. It will promote the quality of English Writing Teaching for postgraduates and help to cultivate their reflective ability and constructive learning ability.

Keywords

Case teaching; English writing case bank; Postgraduate English writing teaching.

1. Introduction

Nowadays there are some problems existing in the teaching of English writing in Colleges and universities, which are greatly influenced by the traditional teaching methods. Teachers do not understand the students' writing process, and this teaching method also leads to a serious classroom teaching atmosphere, students' low interest in learning to write, so the quality of writing teaching is not high. At present, in College English writing, students generally feel that there is no content to write, and they don't know how to start to write. The main reason is that the cultivation of students' writing ability is not enough in the writing teaching, which pays attention to theoretical teaching and ignores the cultivation of students' practical writing ability. Therefore, students' English writing ability is not high.

The traditional teaching method of writing class is to first talk about the definition of genre, then the characteristics, then the classification, then the structure, and finally the problems that should be paid attention to in writing. This kind of teaching method has its own system, the content is closely related, and the logic is strong. It is easy for classroom lecturers to operate, and the initiative is in the hands of teachers, so it is welcomed by many teachers. The defect of this teaching method is that the lecturers only pay attention to the systematicity of the writing knowledge itself, the convenience of their own lectures, and ignore the acceptance psychology and acceptance level of the students as the main body of the learning process. It is easy to form a fixed teaching mode that does not focus on the objects, levels and patterns. This kind of teaching method is cramming teaching, which is carried out around teachers everywhere. It completely violates the scientific teaching principle of "teachers as the leading role, students as the main learner", and ignores the dominant learning position of students. The teacher speaks with relish in class, and the students may feel drowsy when they listen to the lecture. The effect of classroom teaching can be very bad. In order to get rid of this cramming teaching method, it is necessary to restate the main position of students and mobilize their enthusiasm and initiative in learning.

2. The Practical Significance of Introducing Case Teaching Method into Postgraduate English Writing Teaching

2.1. The Definition of Case Teaching Method

The case teaching method originated in 1870's, which was advocated by Harvard Law School, and then developed by Harvard Business School. At that time, Harvard Business School adopted a very unique case teaching mode. These cases are all from real situations or events of business management. In this way, it helps to cultivate and develop students' active participation in classroom discussion. After implementation, it is quite effective. It was not until the 1980s that this case-based teaching method attracted the attention of teacher training. In 1986, Carnegie Task Force of the United States published the report *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, which highly recommended the value of case-based teaching method in teacher training courses, and regard it as a quite effective teaching mode. And it is after the 1990s that the domestic education circles began to explore the case teaching method.

Case teaching method refers to the teaching method with case as the core of teacher-student interaction. Specifically, case teaching method refers to a teaching method that relies on cases as teaching materials, combines with teaching topics, and enables learners to understand concepts or theories related to teaching topics through the teaching process of teacher-student interaction such as discussion, question and answer, so as to cultivate learners' high-level ability (Zhang, 2005:7) Therefore, when applying the case teaching method, the content of the case must be closely combined with the curriculum objectives, teaching themes and teaching process. Cases should be presented before the teaching process, so that learners can fully understand beforehand. The process of teaching should also take cases as the core, and carry out activities such as discussion, question and answer, role play, writing or reading. The content of the case and the process of teaching, just like the teaching material and teaching method, can not be separated, which should be closely combined, so as to form a good case teaching. In the process of case teaching, the teacher stands in the role of promoter and guide, and encourages the interaction between learners and teachers, as well as between learners. Through interaction, learners can get the opinions from teachers and other different learners, increase the depth and breadth of understanding of problems, and cultivate their own ability of expression and communication, reflection and criticism, attitude of respecting others' opinions and ability of autonomous learning.

2.2. The Necessity of Introducing Case Teaching Method into English Writing Teaching for Postgraduates

Postgraduate English, a degree course for non English major postgraduates, puts forward high requirements for their writing ability. It requires postgraduates not only to consolidate the basic skills of English writing, but also to cultivate their strong practical or academic writing ability. However, in the actual English learning of postgraduates, the basic English language skills and English application ability of non English major postgraduates are not satisfactory, and their English writing ability is far from the teaching goal of postgraduate English writing. For a period of time, English writing class is mainly taught by teachers, and there is no time for postgraduate students to do writing practice. As a result, writing teaching becomes a mere formality, which has little effect on improving the writing ability of postgraduates. The rise of case teaching method gives English writing a new teaching perspective and a new teaching mode. The introduction of case teaching method into the teaching of English writing for postgraduates and the establishment of a typical and practical database of English writing cases will help to improve the teaching quality of English writing for postgraduates.

Since the teaching of English writing for postgraduates has its own unique rules, it is very feasible to establish a practical teaching case bank according to the rules of language, structure

and thinking in English writing. The construction and application of case bank can change the phenomenon of "monologue" of teachers, attract postgraduates to participate in the research and discussion of writing cases, and activate Postgraduates' English writing thinking. Therefore, the construction of the case bank of postgraduate English writing becomes very necessary.

3. On the Theoretical basis of Case Teaching Method and the Construction of English writing Case Bank for Postgraduates

3.1. The Theoretical Basis of Case Teaching Method

The case-based teaching method is a case-based teaching method. The essence of the case is to put forward a dilemma of education, and there is no specific solution. Teachers play the role of designers and motivators in teaching, and encourage students to actively participate in the discussion. Case teaching has the characteristics of reflective teaching, which can promote students to reflect on the cases. Case teaching can reflect the learning principles of constructivism and cultivate learners' cognitive style of construction orientation; Case teaching emphasizes the active participation of learners, the discussion and negotiation between teachers and students, encourages students to express different views, emphasizes the reflection of problem solving, and does not encourage mechanical practice activities; The case teaching method emphasizes that learners should establish their own views and learn more about other different views, that is, emphasizing the transfer of knowledge. Case teaching can provide different knowledge teaching, including explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge. (Zhang, 2005: 41-57)

3.2. Theoretical Thinking on the Construction of English writing Case Bank for Postgraduates

This paper takes the construction of postgraduate English writing case bank as the research object, discusses the compilation of postgraduate English writing cases through extensive investigation of various resources and corpora, and constructs a set of systematic, practical and typical postgraduate English writing case database, so as to provide a new teaching practice platform for postgraduate English writing teaching. The main contents include: establishing a systematic case bank of English writing classification for postgraduates; applying the classified case bank of English writing for postgraduates to the teaching practice of English writing for postgraduates. The key problem to be solved in this paper is the systematicness of the construction of the classified case bank of postgraduate English writing. A set of writing cases should systematically help graduate students form strong practical writing ability and academic writing ability. Writing cases should not only reflect the law of language, but also have the function of cultivating postgraduates' writing thinking ability. At the same time, it should also have the function of "cultivating morality and cultivating talents". So the choice of English writing text into the case bank becomes very critical.

Through consulting the literature of philosophy, linguistics, education and management at home and abroad, this paper analyzes the English writing texts by referring to the theories of relevant disciplines and mathematical statistics methods, and selects those texts that can reflect the rules of English writing, so as to strive for the authenticity, universality and operability of the text cases, which not only contains the relevant teaching points of writing, but also contains the analysis of students' problems. The construction of English writing case bank for postgraduates attaches great importance to student-centered, writing problems as the starting point, and discussion as the means to promote the collaborative participation and dialogue between teachers and students, and constantly realize the construction and creation of English writing knowledge oriented to practice, so as to effectively enhance students' systematic

mastery of English writing theory, flexible use of writing knowledge and the courage to carry out innovative and comprehensive English writing ability.

In the traditional college English writing class, teachers have always been the protagonist of writing teaching activities. They usually carry out specific teaching practice according to their preset teaching objectives and teaching contents, and occupy an absolute dominant position in the whole process. In contrast, students become "marginal" and "silent" in writing classroom teaching. Nowadays, the construction and application of the case bank of English Writing Teaching for postgraduates break the traditional writing teaching mode, provide a platform to realize the effective combination of writing theory and writing practice, and highlight the strong application value of the case bank.

Postgraduate English is a degree course for all non English majors, and its importance is self-evident. The construction and application of the case bank of English Writing Teaching for postgraduates will help to improve the quality of English Writing Teaching for postgraduates. It not only provides English teachers with a new teaching mode with strong operability, but also injects them with a new teaching concept, and provides a media and platform for their writing teaching and scientific research communication. This case bank has a good promotional value. Once the case bank is promoted, it will benefit the non English Major Postgraduates in and out of Guilin University of Electronic Technology (GUET) in the cultivation of English writing ability.

4. The Practical Process of the Construction of English writing Case Bank for Postgraduates

4.1. The Construction of Classified Case Bank of English Writing for Postgraduates

There are 18 cases in this database, which are divided into Narrative part (3); Description part (5); The expository part (3); Argumentative part (3); English abstract (2); English report (2). Cases include basic cases and application cases, which can be used to cultivate the writing knowledge and writing ability of postgraduates respectively. Each case tries to select representative texts to guide postgraduates to discuss the structural knowledge of related genres and writing strategies and methods of genres. Application cases try to use hot topics to stimulate the writing motivation of postgraduate students. All cases try to use multimodal symbol resources, such as color, font, typesetting, audio or video, pictures and symbols, to increase the attraction and expressiveness of the case bank, which aim to enhance the use effect of the case bank. After the case bank is built, the maintainer of the case bank needs to update the case bank in real time as time goes on, such as deleting outdated cases and adding new cases that meet the requirements of the times.

4.2. On the Use of the Classified Case Bank of English Writing for Postgraduates

The application of case-based teaching method in postgraduate English writing class is to consciously choose suitable cases, put forward a series of questions, which are given to them to think, in order to stimulate students' interest in writing knowledge and writing practice. In the process of using case-based teaching, the author combines it with problem-based teaching method. After setting the writing situation, the author takes the task to be solved as a big problem, and gradually decomposes it into smaller problems with internal relations, and then explains one small problem after another, and finally shows examples and analyzes the examples. When the major problems are finished, students will be eager to try to solve similar problems with the methods they have learned. At this time, the teacher immediately chooses a similar case again, let the students practice. By solving problems, students will feel the improvement of their ability. This experience will further stimulate students' interest and

motivation in learning follow-up writing styles. The core idea of case teaching method is to create specific situations around students' dominant position, guide students step by step with case questions as clues, stimulate students' interest, guide students to think and lead students to practice. Case teaching always let the students' ideas and interests follow the teacher's teaching, but it is the students themselves groping to go. For the postgraduate English writing course, case teaching is a more suitable teaching method, but it is not the only teaching method. To do a good job in writing teaching, we need to stimulate students' interest in learning, cultivate students' writing habits such as reading more and practicing more, aiming to change the teachers' teaching into students' own learning. Of course, case teaching method is only one of the teaching methods to improve writing ability, which cannot replace other teaching methods.

4.3. Misunderstandings to be Avoided in the Use of Classified Case Bank for Postgraduate English Writing

The users of case bank can't absolutely distinguish case teaching from traditional teaching, and can't hold the dualistic opposite thinking of the above two kinds of teaching, that is, they are irreconcilable, and can't exaggerate the limitations of traditional teaching and the advantages of case teaching. As a matter of fact, traditional teaching and case teaching are two kinds of teaching methods with two peaks confrontation and two water diversion, which have their own advantages and disadvantages. They are two kinds of teaching methods suitable for different disciplines. In addition, if the teacher ignores his guiding responsibility and gives the classroom to the students completely, then the teacher will lose control of the classroom and discussion, which will lead to the situation of fuzzy teaching knowledge and even no learning outcomes, thus weakening the advantages of case teaching.

The misunderstanding of the nature of case teaching and the role of teachers leads to the misuse of lesson preparation. This kind of misuse subverts the teacher's behavior of preparing lessons: some teachers think it is unnecessary to write teaching plans; Some teaching plans have only a few rough points; The teaching goal is fuzzy, and the case selection is random; The selected case type is not clear; There is no logical line, no clear knowledge and theory in the teaching plan; Teachers' comments are based on on-the-spot performance; There is little or no blackboard writing plan in class preparation. In short, adhere to a simple method which is completely opposite to the traditional teaching method of lesson preparation. In fact, case teaching needs a complete and clear teaching outline. Teaching cases should be selected according to teaching purposes. Teachers need to find a clear logic line or decision line. We must dig out the knowledge, theory and criterion behind the case story.

The misuse of discussion in case teaching is shown in two aspects: first, the combination of students' discussion and teachers' comments is equivalent to the form of case teaching, which reduces the role of teachers in guiding and improving the classroom, and the mining of theories and guidelines is not in place. Second, most of the time in the classroom is given to students to discuss and report in groups, and the case topics are chosen and determined by students independently, which often leads to the failure to present the knowledge thoroughly and completely; Teacher comments last only a few minutes; There is no chance to think, apply and carve the teaching wisdom and skills of case teaching. If the group report is prepared half a month in advance, the class discussion will be moved out of class, and teachers will not have opportunities to evaluate students' classroom behavior. This kind of discussion without evaluation and syllabus, and the free and superficial comment is the basic situation of case teaching in China. (Zhang, 2016)

Case teaching is not only the imaginary teaching method of students' discussion and teachers' comments, but also it is the same as the traditional teaching organization form: the case teaching form does not change the teaching essence, it is mainly based on teachers' teaching or

guidance, it is in the form of class teaching, and it has the application of group learning. It is a misunderstanding to understand case teaching as a subversion of traditional teaching. It is also the teacher who initiates the teaching process, and the teacher also plays a strong traction role. They also need to prepare the teaching plan, have a clear teaching purpose, teaching ideas and blackboard writing plan. It is also the way of cooperation between the teacher and the students, which can ensure the high theoretical degree and control of classroom learning. Effective case discussion is guided and designed by teachers, just as the traditional teaching method does its teaching design. In the traditional teaching and case teaching classroom, teachers' teaching strategies and skills are similar: pay attention to the design of opening questions, emphasize multiple teaching methods and strategies, enrich the content and reasonable structure; both emphasize the attraction of teachers and courses to students, attach importance to teachers' teaching wisdom and skills; both methods can deal with and solve generative problems, and evaluate students' classroom performance in real time. The basic difference between the two methods is that traditional teaching has high efficiency and poor effect, focusing on the results; but the case teaching has low efficiency with good effect, focusing on the process.

5. Conclusion

The goal of case teaching is imitation - transfer ability. But the goal of traditional teaching is knowledge acceptance and application. The order of presenting knowledge and the process of thinking in the classroom are very different because of two different training objectives: the traditional teaching order is deductive method - universal knowledge - example teaching - practical application; The order of case teaching is induction teaching - case - principle and rule. Case teaching embodies the essence of deep teaching (Guo, 2009, 2017), that is, to guide students' active learning, to guide students to actively transfer the case knowledge they have learned, to combine knowledge with practical application, to advocate cooperative learning, to emphasize reflection, and to return to the essence of learning.

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