

Teaching Mode Exploration Basing on the Text of *New Horizon College English Text Book for Reading and Writing*

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Received 27 October 2017; accepted 21 December 2017
Published online 26 December 2017

Abstract

The *New Horizon College English Text Book for Reading and Writing* embodies the application-oriented designing concept that combines listening, speaking, reading and writing. It puts students' comprehensive application ability at the forefront. The core is to develop students' ability to comprehensively applying language. Teachers must use this as the basis for selecting teaching mode in the process of using teaching materials. This paper takes *New Horizon College English Text Book for Reading and Writing* as an example, combining with practical experience, to discuss how to teach the text, and to propose the teaching mode, which contains vocabulary, discourse and linguistic points, and cognition strategy. For vocabulary teaching, the ability, which truly enables learners to understand and use words accurately, needs to emphasize learning vocabulary in communication through systematic principle, communication principle, cultural principle, cognitive principle, and emotional principle. Discourse teaching is the main body of the text teaching, main mean and approach to develop students' ability of rapid reading and understanding. It requires teaching the text as an organic integrity, and first, it must be understood and explained. For linguistic point teaching, students are more opposed to simply making a list of language usages and then exemplifying them. In fact, students are more in favor of "connecting, discovering rules, understanding and memorizing, exercising key points, and using reverse thinking to standardize the language." Overall, text teaching design

is the main body of in-class teaching. And in-class activities should focus on this subject, as well. The in-class teaching activities should be a mind-innovation process including learning, thinking, deliberating, inquiring, reasoning and judging. Therefore, teachers should focus on these aspects, continuously deepening the text book. In addition, the teachers' thought will be explored during the process.

Key words: *New Horizon College English Text Book for Reading and Writing*; Text teaching mode; Cognition strategy

Zheng, C. (2017). Teaching Mode Exploration Basing on the Text of *New Horizon College English Text Book for Reading and Writing*. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 15(6), 27-30. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/10210>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/10210>

INTRODUCTION

Looking at the current English text teaching modes in colleges, it is easy to find that many teachers are still using traditional teaching methods such as string and section teaching, lecture-practice-use mode, grammar and translation mode, and so on. There is no in-depth excavation based on the teaching materials themselves, nor management on relations among vocabulary teaching, textual explanations, linguistic points teaching and other aspects. Students' abilities are not developed step by step. On this point, the author has made some examples and methods from the teaching process in the past two years and proposed some new teaching modes for *New Horizon College English Text Book for Reading and Writing* (herein referred to as the NHCE).

1. UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF COMPILATION OF *NEW HORIZON COLLEGE ENGLISH TEXT BOOK FOR READING AND WRITING*

Widdowson, the famous linguist, pointed out that: “Communication-centered language teaching requires a teaching method that combines language skills and communicative competence.” He also said: “From the point of view of in-class teaching, although some in-class exercises or activities may focus on the training of a specific skill, their success often requires the learner to use other communication skills.” It embodies design concept of application-oriented, listening, speaking, reading, and writing all-in-one text book, putting students’ comprehensive application ability in the first place. Hence, we can see that the core of NHCE is to develop students’ ability of comprehensively applying language, which should be regarded as the basis of teachers’ choice of teaching mode.

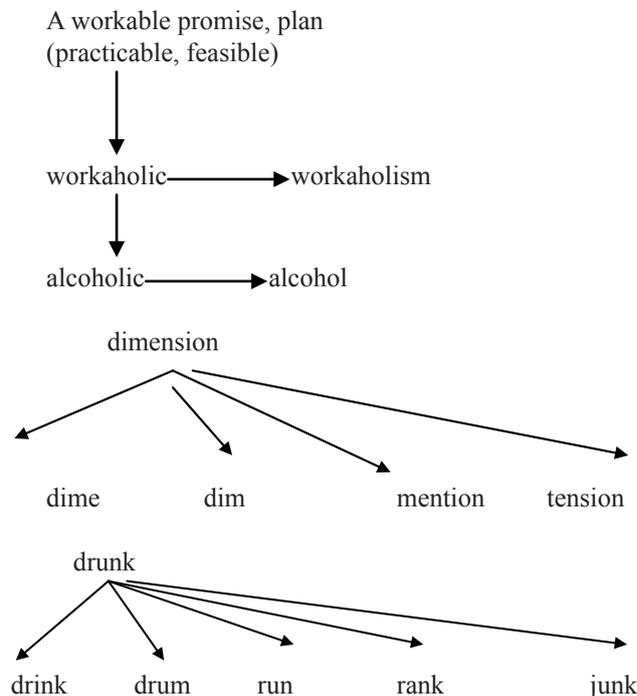
2. DISCUSSION ON VOCABULARY TEACHING OF *NEW HORIZON COLLEGE ENGLISH TEXT BOOK FOR READING AND WRITING*

Vocabulary teaching should occupy an important position in the teaching of texts. Most of the teachers using NHCE in our school will teach vocabulary before the text. As an important part of the language input for each lesson, the importance of vocabulary teaching is also evident. Failure in memorizing words will seriously dampen students’ enthusiasm. Since teachers often teach vocabulary inflexibly, most students cannot deal with it and have to memorize words with little success. It is important to truly enable learners’ ability of accurately understand and use words, in addition to emphasizing “learning in communication” and learning through indirect method (indirect or implicit teaching of vocabulary). Shu and Zhuang (1996) pointed out that the essential features of language and the characters of foreign language teaching determine that these principles should be followed in any form of foreign language teaching: (a) systematic principle; (b) communicational principle; (c) cultural principle; (d) cognitive principle; (e) emotional principles.

2.1 Systematic Principle

Language is a system that consists of various subsystems. The vocabulary system is one of the important subsystems. The characteristic of the system is the relevance of its internal components. For example, in syndicated relationships, synonyms, antisense relationships, and up-and-down semantic relationships among words can be

used to help students grasp and remember the meaning of words. This is a commonly used method. The author believes that connecting the vocabulary in a tree-chart approach can broaden students’ thought and allow them to build a bridge between the known vocabulary and the vocabulary they are learning. For example, some of the new words in the Section B of Unit 7 in the NHCE can be illustrated below.



The above method is to disassemble the words into different parts that produce close associations, which can help students to establish the relationship between different words.

2.2 Communicational Principle

Language is a tool for communication. The ultimate goal of language learning is to communicate. Therefore, students should learn to use language in real communication environment as much as possible and really master the language.

2.3 Cultural Principle

Language is based on culture. The vocabulary structure, meaning structure and collocation are all marked with the cultural imprint of the language community. While teaching a foreign language vocabulary, it requires distinguishing between some “deceptive” “fake friends”.

2.4 Cognitive Principle

In linguistic communication, two kinds of words— one is open vocabulary, that is, the notional word, and the other is closed vocabulary, that is structural word— have different function and involve different types of errors. Open vocabulary mostly involves in replacement

error (that is, a misnomer or a phoneme), while a closed vocabulary is mostly related to inappropriate reduction or addition. It suggests that the cognitive bases of two vocabularies in mind are different. Hence, learners should use different methods to memorize.

2.5 Emotional Principle

Teachers should fully arouse learners' interest and develop their enthusiasm for learning vocabulary. It is possible to ask students to do question-and-answer in the class. For example, student A tells the English meaning and student B replies the corresponding word, and so on. If Student B cannot answer the word, he can ask any classmate in the class to help him and complete the Solitaire game. This can also develop the students' collective spirit and reduce their pressure when they are facing challenges. This utilizes the emotional principle.

3. DISCOURSE TEACHING

Discourse teaching is the main body of text teaching and it is the main means and approach to develop students' ability of rapid reading and understanding. It first requires teachers to teach the text as an organic integrity, and first, it must be understood and explained. This is the scope of pragmatics. There are various types of articles in the NHCE on which different Discourse teaching modes can be used. The author summarizes them as (a) story-telling (b) question-caused thinking (c) outlining (d) key point-extracting and chapter-rewriting.

3.1 Story-Telling

In section B, Unit 3, Volume I of the NHCE, *The Right Son at the Right Time* tells a touching story. The article is easy to understand, and the plot is real and moving. It allows readers to feel the sublimity of love, to question and answer the human nature, and to have an impact on the soul. Based on his/her understanding the chapter, the teacher can design an activity to allow students to repeat the story and realize that "As long as everyone gives a little love, the world will become better." The general steps of this activity are as follows:

- (a) Have a discussion with partners
- (b) Students are required to make up the story of each by building up one sentence of it. One student stands up and says the first sentence, and then it comes to the next one, then the next one.

In this activity, students cannot be self-centered. One must consider the sentence said the former classmate and then continue it. Also, he cannot jump to the end of the story by skipping his part. It develops students' awareness of cooperation and caring for others, which meet the subject of this lesson.

3.2 Question-Caused Thinking

Due to the introduction questions prior to every article in NHCE, some teachers will just follow the default setting.

In fact, this will make teachers reluctant to dig out the text of the lesson and unable to ask questions that are more in depth and match the topic of the article better. The design of the question is explained using Section B, Unit 4, Volume 3 of NHCE (*Engelbreit's the Name, Cute Is My Game*)

This article is about the postcard designer Mary Engelbreit's growth. Teachers can propose an overview question according to each part of the text so that students can grasp the main content and finally lead to the question *What Leads to Mary Engelbreit's Success?* This question is open and closely connected to the actual students' situation. It triggers their thought on the current status, on the inevitable and contingent factors of success, and the establishment of positive life goals. Teachers can sum them up and come to the following points:

- Question: What Leads to Mary Engelbreit's Success?
- a) Flexibility
 - b) Cheerful, down to earth, humorous and always cute
 - c) Innovative
 - d) Marked individuality
 - e) Venturesome, ready to take risks, daring
 - f) Goal-oriented
 - g) Family love
 - h) Be modest and practical
 - i) Learning from doing (the most important element)

3.3 Outlining

For texts with clear structure, for instance written in typical problem-solution pattern, the use of this analysis method is very appropriate for students to quickly grasp the context of the article. Section A, Unit 7, Volume 3 of NHCE is a typical example. This article describes the competition between rose dealers. After the teacher's analysis, an outline with key part omitted can be provided to students for filling.

Outline

Thesis (controlling idea): _____

- I. Introduction: _____
- II. Main idea/body
 - A. Sub-idea (the example of Roses Only)
 1. Introduction to Roses Only: _____
 2. Problem it has to face: _____
 3. Solutions:
a. _____ b. _____ c. _____ d. _____
 - B. Sub-idea (the example of Johnson Flowers of California)
 1. Introduction to Johnson Flowers: _____
 2. Problem it has to face: _____
 3. Solutions
a. _____ b. _____ c. _____ d. _____
- III. Conclusion: _____

3.4 Key Point-Extracting and Chapter-Rewriting

This method is suitable for science expositions with more terminology around a topic, such as Section A, Unit 2,

Volume 3 in NHCE (*Iron and the Effects of Exercise*). Students feel that it is fragmented and cannot grasp the key point. However, the author noticed that the focus of this article should be on expressing the relationship between the movement and iron spoken in an accurate language. Therefore, in the teaching process, students should pay special attention to some expressions related to this relationship and collect them, such as: iron deficiency, health-conscious, red meat, restrict their diet, etc. They need to check if they can complete those translation exercises. If they can, it means that the most useful part of this relatively fragmented article has been learned.

Translate the Discourse into English, employing the expressions you have learned in this section:

缺铁在女性当中是很常见的，造成这种现象的原因有很多。有的女性保健意识很强，拒绝食用牛肉和……

English version:

Iron deficiency is common among women and there are many reasons for this. Some women have a strong sense of health care and refuse to eat beef and lamb.

Some women are very health-conscious, and they reject red meat, which contains the most easily affected form of iron....

Discourse teaching is a difficult part. However, the basic concept of teaching should be based on texts and students, and focusing on reconstructing the internal organization model of the texts or chapters in order to help students quickly and accurately go through these models. As Guy Cook (1989), the British applied linguist, said,

From an pedagogic point of view, it is important to make students understand the different types of articles as early as possible so that they can categorize articles that they read and, like us, use the knowledge of the problem to write different articles. (p.97)

4. LINGUISTIC POINT TEACHING

Teachers should make full use of limited in-class teaching time to do a good job of linguistic-point teaching and develop students' basic skills. Students are opposed to simply making a list of linguistic usages, and then citing examples. In fact, students are more in favor of "connecting, searching for patterns, understanding and

memorizing, exercising key points, and reverse-thinking and regulating language." Teachers should pay attention to the following points:

(a) Select the appropriate key points, explain shortly, focusing on the choice of key points with wide application, cooperation and specialty. For example, the word "fame" in Volume 3 of NHCE. A series of very authentic expressions derive from it, such as achieve/acquire world-wide fame, reach fame, bear a great fame for..., earn Enduring fame, extend one's fame, etc.

(b) Teach students how to effectively memorize and master linguistic points, and to give the necessary instructions. For example to memorize succession, confession, hesitation, and competition by suffix mnemonics (these words have all appeared in the NHCE and should be summed together), and then distinguish the meaning of the words.

(c) Adopt active-teaching model to guide and encourage students: i) following the original knowledge ideas and pushing forward one more step; ii) restraining the original erroneous knowledge; iii) opening up new areas of knowledge. This is where innovative ideas lie (Liu, 1999).

The design of the text teaching is the main body of in-class teaching. And in-class activities should also be developed around this subject. In-class teaching activities should be a mind-innovation process involves learning, thinking, deliberating, inquiring, reasoning, and judging. Therefore, teachers should also focus on these aspects, constantly digging deeper in textbooks. The teacher's thought will also be explored.

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