The Holistic Teaching Design of Senior High School English Unit based on the Concept of English Learning Activities—Exploring English of FLTRP as An Example

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Abstract: The concept of English learning activities is advocated by the new curriculum standard. It is an effective method to promote the implementation of the core literacy of English subjects through a series of progressive learning activities. On the basis of distinguishing the relationship between the concept of English learning activities, the holistic teaching of the unit and the big ideas, this paper explains how to carry out teaching design based on the concept of English learning activities through specific cases. Providing specific and feasible solutions for the implementation of the learning activities advocated by the new curriculum standards at the three levels of learning to understand, applying to practice, and transferring to innovation.

Keywords: The view of English learning activity, Holistic teaching of the unit, High school English.

1. Introduction

The English Curriculum Standards for General Senior High Schools (2017 version 2020 revision) pointed out that the design of English courses should be based on the concept of English learning activities, relying on independent learning, cooperative learning, inquiry learning and other methods to promote the development of the core literacy of the subject. Carrying out the holistic teaching of the unit is conducive to the overall grasp of the cultivation of the core literacy of the discipline (Cui Yunhuo, 2019). The “Curriculum Standards” clarifies that the English learning activities is the basic form of English classrooms and one of the important ways to ensure the implementation of core literacy. Therefore, in classroom teaching, how to practice the concept of English learning activities on the basis of the whole unit teaching is a problem that all teachers must face and think about.

2. The Concept of English Learning Activities and the Holistic Teaching of the Unit

The English learning activities refers to a series of comprehensive, relevant and practical English learning activities including learning and understanding, application and practice, transfer and innovation, etc. Undering the guidance of the theme meaning. In the study of typed discourses, in the process of analyzing and solving problems, one acquires language knowledge, improves language skills, promotes thinking development, and enhances cultural understanding and value judgment (Zheng Lijing, 2022).

The concept of English learning activities is proposed to solve the problems of fragmentation of teaching content and teaching for exams. The holistic unit teaching can solve the problem of teaching fragmentation and promote the implementation of core literacy goals (Hurun, Chen Xinzhong, 2020). Only through the holistic teaching of the unit and the implement of the concept of English learning activities, it is possible to integrate the scattered teaching based on the preparation of lessons in a single class hour, and improve the systematicness and effectiveness of classroom teaching.

In the process of the holistic teaching design of the unit, teachers should pay attention to refining the big ideas of the unit. From the perspective of the nature of the discipline, the big ideas are the core knowledge, ideas and values that reflect the essence of the discipline; from the perspective of the curriculum content, the big ideas are the core framework for connecting the teaching content; from the perspective of the process and method, the big ideas are the principle governing the teaching and learning process and methods (Wang Qiang, Zhou Mi et al., 2021). In short, the big ideas are the most valuable knowledge in the discipline, but it does not refer to the specific discipline knowledge, but the concepts and ideas behind the specific knowledge that reflect the essence of the discipline. It plans the organization of teaching content, the design and evaluation of teaching activities (Dun J’ian, He Caixia, 2019). The refinement of big ideas is an indispensable part of the holistic teaching of the unit, and it is also the basis for teachers to design and organize teaching. However, big ideas about specific topics are difficult to achieve through the study of a single discourse. Only through the study of multiple discourses of different types, constructing knowledge of related topics from multiple perspectives, and excavating the deep meaning behind the discourses, can we help students to form a relatively complete cognition, value judgment and behavior orientation on the topic (Wang Qiang, Sun Weiwei, et al., 2021).

3. The Holistic Teaching Design of Senior High School English Unit based on the Concept of English Learning Activities

The following is an example of Unit 2 Exploring English, which is a compulsory course for senior high school “English” in the Foreign Language Research Institute version (2020), to illustrate how to design the holistic teaching of the unit based on the concept of English learning activities.
3.1 Study the Content of the Unit and Determine the Teaching Objectives of the Unit

The subject context of this unit is “people and self”, and the subject content includes learning English and exploring English. This unit starts with an introduction to the use of various languages, followed by an introduction to the diversity and creativity of the English language, English word formation, the differences between British English and American English, English expressions that are unfamiliar to students, and easily misunderstood expressions in English learning. Learning content. From the perspective of text types, the multimodal texts in this unit cover charts, videos, essays, forum discussions, and pictures. The unit study content is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Unit 2 Exploring learning content in this English unit</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit plate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Starting out</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using language</td>
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<td>Developing ideas</td>
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<td>Presenting ideas</td>
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Starting from the four dimensions of the core literacy of the subject and based on the analysis of the content, the learning objectives of this unit can be described from the following four aspects: (1) Language proficiency goals. Be able to read the content of the article, understand the meaning the author wants to convey, understand polysemy and idioms in English with context; be able to understand and talk about topics related to English vocabulary and expressions; be able to describe difference between British English and American English, use word formation properly for word reconstruction and can describe the misunderstanding and confusion in the process of English learning. (2) Cultural awareness goals. Be able to understand the diversity, difference, creativity and reasons behind English; be able to notice the inner link between language development, social development and cultural differences. (3) Thinking quality goals. Be able to look at the diversity of languages and cultural differences dialectically; be able to understand the text in depth, and at the same time connect with their own reality, reflect on the problems they encountered in the process of English learning, and put forward countermeasures. (4) Learning ability goals. Be able to arouse interest in English learning by understanding the characteristics of English and interesting facts related to English; be able to obtain English learning resources from multiple channels, choose appropriate strategies and methods to monitor, evaluate, reflect and adjust their learning content and process.

3.2 Determine Lesson Goals and Design Learning Activities based on Unit Goals

The realization of the unit goal depends on the students’ learning and integration of each discourse under the theme[7]. The following takes the reading text Neither pine nor apple in pineapple as an example to discuss how to carry out reading teaching through English learning activities and realize the exploration of the meaning of the theme.

The genre of the discourse is an argumentative essay. This article uses examples to list the regular phenomena and the confusing phenomena that do not conform to the regular in English vocabulary. There are seven paragraphs in the main text, of which the first to sixth paragraphs illustrate the confusion in English by the author, including compound word formation, verb collocation, part-of-speech conversion, idioms, abbreviations and the use of prepositional phrases. The seventh paragraph summarizes and sublimates the theme. It is because of the creativity of English that we are so interesting and flexible in the process of using it. The article uses a large number of examples to illustrate the confusing phenomenon of English, which is why the author considers English to be a “crazy” language. In the process of reading articles, students can not only learn about the characteristics of English, but also experience the interesting aspects of English, feel the humor, madness and creativity of the English language, thus stimulating students’ interest in learning English.

Lesson teaching objectives:

1) obtain the general idea of the article through skimming; obtain the detailed information of the article through intensive reading, sort out the relationship between the information, and summarize the classification and characteristics of English confusing phenomena.
2) Understand the author’s writing ideas, analyze the writing characteristics of argumentative papers, and learn the writing techniques of argumentative papers;

3) Experience the diversity, fun and creativity of English language learning, understand the cultural connotations behind English vocabulary and collocations, and discover similar phenomena in Chinese;

4) Combined with your previous English learning experience, think about the difficulties in English learning and how to deal with them, establish a correct view of English learning, and cultivate confidence and interest in English learning.

Step 1: Lead in

Activity 1: play a word game

The teacher invites the students to play a word game. Teacher divides students into several groups, then give each group a set of written cards, one word on one card, then students need to combine two cards to get a new word. After discussion, students need to write what they have gained on blackboard as soon as quickly. Of course, they can write other words that are not on these given cards, as long as it is combined by two words whose meanings are different from the integrated one. Which group find the most words will be praised.

[Design purpose] To start the learning of this class in the way of games, to stimulate their interest in the learning content of this class, and to make students feel relaxed and happy. Through group cooperation to complete tasks, exercise students’ ability to work in groups. Using contest which group finds the most combinations of words is winner to stimulate competition between groups and increase student motivation. This game can also make students more interested in reading content, paving the way for students to read later, so that students can predict reading content more accurately.

Step 2: Reading

Activity 2: prediction

First, teacher lead students to analyze the title “Neither pine nor apple in pineapple”. Then, ask students to guess the content of the text in group according to the pictures and titles. choose the correct choice of author’s purpose.

Q1: Do you know the meaning of the title?

Q2: Can you guess what is the passage about?

Activity 3: Fast reading

students do a fast reading to check their guess and find the author’s writing purposes, to find some sentences that express author’s viewpoint about English.

Activity 4: Detailed reading

Students do a detailed reading and finish the notes on textbook. Then guide students to make a summary of interesting English phenomena in the text.

Q: What’s the type of examples does author give?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>hamburger, pineapple, eggplant, abbreviation WHO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense</td>
<td>hard-soft, hardly-sootily; harmless-harmful, shameless-shameful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>It’s raining/snowing(y), It’s sunshine/ing. (+)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity 5: Exploring the genre

Students summarize the genre and writing techniques by group discussion.

Q1: What’s the genre of this passage?

Q2: How does author organize this passage?

[Design purpose] Reading link - learning comprehension activity. Before reading, lead students to analyze the title of the article, clear the reading obstacles caused by the students’ incomprehension of the title, and lay the groundwork for the prediction link. Guide students to predict the content of the article through pictures and titles, stimulate students’ interest in reading the article, and pave the way for formal reading. Students grasp the gist of the article through quick reading and verify their guesses. Students can grasp the key information of the article by reading and understand the details of the article. Guide students to summarize the examples of English confusion listed in the article. On the one hand, they summarize and dig deep into the content of the article. On the other hand, students discover and summarize interesting phenomena of English use, think about the connotation of words, and explore the diversity of English language learning, realize the diversity, interesting, and creativity of the English language. Through the throwing of questions and group discussions, students are guided to conclude that the type of article is an argumentative essay and the characteristics of writing (presenting a point of view-example-argument-summary).

Step 3: Thinking

Activity 6: talk about the origins

After reading the following information behind the passage, students retell the origins of “pineapple”, “hamburg”, and “eggplant”, think about if the information gives them a better understanding of the passage.

Activity 7: Transferring

The teacher guides students to consider whether there are familiar words in Chinese. For example, wife cake.

[Design purpose] Thinking link - application practice activities. By reading prompting information, students understand the origin of words such as “pineapple”, “hamburg”, and “eggplant”, feel the fun and creativity of English vocabulary, and realize the culture behind the vocabulary. And through the comparison of Chinese and English vocabulary, students’ cross-cultural awareness is cultivated.