

Research on Higher Vocational English Classroom Teaching Oriented to Deep Learning

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Abstract: As a fundamental discipline in the curriculum system of higher vocational education, English instruction must be oriented toward deep learning to foster students' core competencies. This entails integrated teaching across four dimensions: cultural awareness, linguistic competence, learning capacity, and thinking quality. Such an approach equips students with strong workplace competitiveness and adaptability, effectively elevates their comprehensive quality, and supports their all-round development. Against this backdrop, this paper first provides a brief introduction to deep learning, analyzes the deficiencies in traditional higher vocational English classroom teaching, and proposes targeted deep learning instructional strategies. The aim is to enhance students' comprehensive literacy and cultivate more versatile talents for society.

Keywords: Deep Learning; Higher Vocational English; Classroom Teaching

1. Introduction

Higher vocational education constitutes a vital component of China's educational system, as its development is instrumental in cultivating high-caliber skilled professionals. Traditional teaching models suffer from monotony, low student motivation, and disconnection between instructional content and real-world demands, thereby failing to meet students' career development needs. Furthermore, with the implementation of deep learning, how to comprehensively advance higher vocational English classroom instruction has become an urgent issue to address. The integration of deep learning into higher vocational English teaching emphasizes not only students' knowledge and skills but also their comprehensive development. It deepens students' understanding and recognition of English cultural knowledge and promotes their overall disciplinary literacy in English.

2. Overview and Characteristics of Deep Learning

2.1 Overview of Deep Learning

The concept of "deep learning" emerged in the 1950s and 1960s. It involves redirecting attention during the learning process and developing scientific, rational learning strategies tailored to different task requirements, enabling learners to gain profound comprehension of textual perspectives and apply such understanding to learning. Since then, scholars worldwide have conducted multi-dimensional and multi-perspective explorations of deep learning, shifting educational focus from surface-level learning to deep learning to support students' holistic development.

2.2 Characteristics of Deep Learning

In curriculum instruction, deep learning exhibits four core characteristics: (1) Initiative and Inquiry: Deep learning centers on students' active exploration. Rather than passively receiving classroom knowledge, students solve practical problems through independent research, thereby deepening their understanding of knowledge. (2) Situatedness and Practicality: Deep learning occurs in concrete contexts. Through task-driven and project-based methods, real-world scenarios are simulated, effectively enhancing learners' problem-solving and practical abilities in authentic language use. (3) Collaboration and Individualization: Deep learning is implemented through group collaboration, fostering close interaction and communication among students and improving their teamwork and communication skills. It also pays close attention to individual differences, providing personalized learning support and diversified pathways to enable students to learn based on their interests. (4) Criticality and Reflectiveness: Deep learning requires students not only to absorb knowledge but also to develop critical thinking skills. They must reflect on and evaluate their learning

processes to enhance self-regulated learning abilities [1].

3. Problems in Higher Vocational English Teaching

3.1 Ambiguous Instructional Objectives

Higher vocational English teaching aims to stimulate students' learning creativity, enlighten their minds, and support their development. Instructional objectives should be integrated into daily teaching to promote students' comprehensive abilities. However, current teaching suffers from unclear objective positioning: it overemphasizes linguistic knowledge and professional skills while neglecting the cultivation of students' learning attitudes, behaviors, and values. This deficiency undermines the formulation of sound higher vocational English teaching objectives.

3.2 Superficial Instructional Content

Superficial content is a prevalent issue in higher vocational English teaching. Influenced by traditional pedagogical concepts, teachers often focus on literal interpretation of texts while ignoring their profound connotations. Consequently, English language is fragmented into grammar, phonetics, and vocabulary, with students expected to learn through rote memorization. This approach hinders the development of students' thinking abilities, reduces their learning motivation and curiosity, and disconnects language from its cultural attributes—seriously impeding the cultivation of students' comprehensive quality [2].

3.3 Monotonous Instructional Models

Traditional “cramming” and “lecture-only” methods persist in some higher vocational English classrooms. These models center on teachers as the sole authority, with knowledge transmitted unilaterally. For instance, teachers systematically explain grammar rules and vocabulary usage, supplemented by extensive repetitive sentence drills and memorization tasks as primary consolidation methods. Students remain passive recipients, with their learning strictly following the teacher's pace. This limits knowledge processing to surface-level memorization without in-depth reflection. The rigid, undifferentiated model exerts two adverse effects: first, it restricts students' divergent thinking, preventing independent knowledge

digestion, deep comprehension, and self-construction of knowledge systems; second, passive input and mechanical drills exhaust students, eroding their enthusiasm and initiative. Ultimately, the standardized, assembly-line model stifles students' learning vitality and individual development.

3.4 Unitary Classroom Assessment

Higher vocational English teaching should guide students toward deep learning, aiming to achieve advanced standards in knowledge and skills while promoting holistic development in language application, cross-cultural cognition, and critical thinking. Current assessment systems are misaligned with this goal. Evaluation still overemphasizes final results and relies heavily on written examinations, focusing on rote memorization of isolated points such as vocabulary spelling and grammar rules. This narrow assessment is inadequate: it fails to reflect students' true linguistic competence, encourages score-oriented learning, and dampens exploratory enthusiasm. It also fails to motivate students to develop key competencies including language application, logical reasoning, and humanistic literacy. The outcome-focused, process-neglecting logic misdirects learning: students prioritize rote memorization for exams over the understanding, flexible application, and innovative transfer emphasized by deep learning. Over time, this weakens students' practical English skills and comprehensive literacy, rendering higher vocational English teaching unable to meet the demand for practical and versatile talents [3].

4. Strategies for Higher Vocational English Classroom Teaching Under Deep Learning

4.1 Formulating Scientific and Rational Instructional Objectives

Deep learning prioritizes the coordinated development of students' cognition, skills, and affective attitudes. Its core is not mere knowledge accumulation but the advancement of cognitive abilities and comprehensive literacy through well-designed learning activities. Higher vocational English objectives must be constructed systematically across dimensions:

Cognitive Dimension: Teachers guide students to deeply understand and flexibly apply core English knowledge, mastering listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills for effective

communication in future work and life—not merely for examinations.

Skill Dimension: Role-plays, situational dialogues, group discussions, and project research create immersive application scenarios, transforming students from knowledge recipients to skill practitioners.

Affective Dimension: Learning interest and intrinsic motivation are stimulated to foster positive attitudes and autonomous learning abilities. Integrated with globalization, objectives include cross-cultural communication competence and international vision, teaching students to respect cultural differences and meet deep learning's holistic development requirements [4].

4.2 Integrating Modern Educational Technology

Educational informatization has enriched higher vocational English resources—digital libraries, online courses, and interactive software provide a solid foundation for innovation. Integrating modern technology expands the breadth and depth of resources, enhances classroom interactivity and practical experience, and supports deep learning. Smart classroom equipment, multimedia tools, and integrated online platforms break spatial constraints, allowing flexible self-paced learning. Real-time feedback and interactive discussion modules resolve learning difficulties promptly, while online assessments enable teachers to monitor progress and mastery. Additionally, immersive technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) construct authentic English learning environments, enabling direct practice in simulated scenarios. This approach improves language proficiency and cross-cultural awareness, shifting students from passive recipients to autonomous learners.

4.3 Enriching Instructional Content

Higher vocational English emphasizes “learning by doing”. Modern technology creates real work and life scenarios, where students complete tasks, solve problems, and actively use English to enhance practical and problem-solving abilities. Teachers must design contexts and integrate professional knowledge to enhance content relevance and practical value. Problem-based design breaks passive learning, centering activities on core English issues to guide independent exploration. This hones

communication skills and equips students with practical problem-solving strategies for future careers, integrating language learning and vocational competence. Furthermore, teachers must address individual differences by designing personalized activities, increasing classroom engagement, understanding students' thinking processes, and facilitating deeper knowledge acquisition.

4.4 Constructing a Diversified Assessment System

Assessment guides subsequent teaching and is critical for promoting student deep learning. Higher vocational colleges should establish a student-centered diversified system focused on growth, integrating formative and summative assessment to overcome traditional limitations.

Formative Assessment: Covers classroom participation, presentation quality, attendance regularity, assignment standardization, and group project collaboration, capturing real-time learning dynamics and progress [5].

Summative Assessment: Uses final comprehensive examinations to review periodic learning outcomes. Integrating both creates a dynamic, three-dimensional system that informs learning planning and drives deep learning in English.

5. Conclusion

In summary, integrating deep learning into higher vocational English teaching—through scientific objectives, modern technology, enriched content, and diversified assessment—improves instructional quality, stimulates learning enthusiasm, enhances students' comprehensive literacy, and lays a solid foundation for their future career development.

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