

Effective Teaching Methods in College English Listening, Speaking, Viewing Classes

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Abstract

Under the guidance of student-centered principle, the combination of speaking and listening principle, production-oriented approach and the integration of high-tech principle, the present paper introduces four effective teaching methods: question-asking, sentence repetition, role-play and group discussion and flipped class.

Keywords

Effective teaching methods, Question-asking, Sentence repetition, Role-play and group discussion, Flipped class.

1. Introduction

As college English teachers, if we want our teaching methods to be effective in our listening, speaking and viewing classes, we must follow certain teaching principles. First, we should abandon the traditional teacher-dominated methods. Instead, we should adopt the student-centered teaching principle. Next, we should combine listening and speaking, as the two should never be separated. In addition, we may adopt the production-oriented approach first put forward by Professor Wen Qiufang. That is, in a typical college English listening, speaking and viewing class, speaking becomes the driving force that stimulates students to put more efforts to read and listen in order to accomplish a certain output oral task. Last, we must integrate high technology into our teaching practice so that we can increase our working efficiency and teaching effectiveness. Based on the above four teaching principles, the body part of the paper will introduce several effective teaching methods.

2. Body

2.1 Teaching Method 1: Question-asking

Considered as a traditional way of teaching, college English teachers can always ask questions in class in order to sustain students' attention and interest. Here are some tips. Teachers are supposed to ask questions in English rather than their native tongue---Chinese. And they should try to express the same meaning of a question in different ways. For example, when a student tries to answer a question, a teacher may first ask the student to repeat the question. If the student has difficulty giving an answer, the teacher should give some clues such as key words concerning the answer. Then the teacher may ask him or her to give the full answer, mostly a complete sentence. For a poor student below the average, the teacher involved should allow him or her to give the answer in Chinese if he or she really cannot utter a word, because that at least checks the student's input quality. Subsequently, the teacher may ask the student to discuss with his or her partner and try to give a satisfied answer the second time. If he or she fails again, their partner should try to answer the question as a substitute. After class, the teacher may ask the poor student's partner to help him or her. This teacher-ask-student-answer pattern is actually a good combination of listening and speaking. For the students, teachers' questions are the language input, and students' answers can be considered as language output.

2.2 Teaching Method 2: Sentence Repetition

Teachers may also ask students to repeat English sentences or retell short passages. As to sentences, instead of choosing sentences randomly library reference books or other online sources, teachers had better pick up sentences from students' textbooks as they are sentences in certain contexts that students have just learned and thus have been familiar with. Teachers may first split a sentence,

dividing it into several parts, and clue the students in by giving them parts of the sentence. For poor students, if they really have trouble doing the repetition task, teachers may allow them to speak out only the key words and the Chinese equivalent. For this activity in class, peers may practice together and help each other and then they may be asked to show their repetition performance in front of the whole class under the guidance of teachers.

Students may be given a chance to retell a short passage after they have done well in sentence repetition. Students probably cannot manage without any references, so teachers may provide the structure of the short passage on the screen of a PowerPoint. Students may then be required to retell the whole story facing the screen of the PowerPoint. Then teachers may ask other students to add details and correct any mistake that the performer has made. At last, teachers may evaluate the performer's performance in the purpose of encouraging them to do better jobs in the future.

2.3 Teaching Method 3: Role-play and Group Discussion

Role-play and group discussion and be the third effective teaching method for teachers both in and after class. This method is highly effective because it involves a lot of interaction and really requires students' comprehensive abilities apart from English language ability. Before students go, teachers should give clear instructions and evaluating criteria such as language (pronunciation, intonation, fluency.....), expressions and gestures, originality and so on. Teachers should divide the class into several groups and select a team leader for each group. Then teachers may provide raw materials when necessary. Teachers are also responsible for guiding the students to change formal English into colloquial English. Teachers should also teach students the role-play and discussion skills and give them advice after watching their rehearsals.

Let me give you a specific example. The following lines are from Unit 2, Book 2, New Horizon College English Speaking, Listening and Viewing textbook. "At the opening you walk onto stage carrying a rose. You hold the rose to your nose with just one finger and thumb, smell it deeply and then say the line in praise of the rose: Ah, the sweet smell of may love." Teachers may bring several roses to class as props. Two students make a pair, with one student giving instructions by reciting the lines, and the other acting out. The best pairs will be rewarded with the roses in the end. From my teaching experience, students show their enthusiasm and keen interest in this task, and they benefit a lot in an all-round manner.

Here is another example. For Part IV Is youth wasted on the young? in Unit 3, Book 3, New Horizon College English Speaking, Listening and Viewing textbook, teachers may use this model dialogue as students' homework assignment. The dialogue is super interesting in that it is about a wife who tries to persuade her husband to cooperate to deliver a baby. The task really arouses students' interest as they are going to play the roles of husband and wife. Students' performances are really more appealing than expected if you take into consideration that the majority of the students are boys who have to play the role of the wife. Teachers may then ask students to rehearse several times and video record and submit their products online. Teachers may continue to ask students to conduct a group discussion on the topic whether they are going to have a baby in the future, which is an equally interesting topic.

2.4 Teaching Method 4: Flipped Class

The last effective teaching method is flipped class. For students of high reading and writing abilities and medium speaking abilities, the flipped class is especially useful. Flipped class strategy can be best used if the class turns out to be a small one with less than 20 students. Content-based instruction is often adopted for flipped classes as teachers and students tend to conduct discussions in class on an equal footing based on the ideas rather than language. Flipped class really imposes much pressure on college English teachers. Apart from doing a lot of work beforehand, teachers must be able to communicate freely in English and master a wide range of knowledge. Besides, teachers must come up with ways to make micro class video clips either by themselves or with the help of others. This is a big challenge for most teachers, especially senior teachers who are not very good at computers. So college English teachers should form teams and cooperate within the teams. They may collect the

proper raw materials for the students and discuss within the groups how to make the micro video clip. They should also work together to assign students' tasks. What is more, they should be ready to answer students' questions both in class off line and after class online. Students, on the other hand, may study in groups, watch the micro video clip several times together and discuss the details. Probably they will be asked to give group presentation in class and give their views on a certain subject.

3. Conclusion

To sum up, having applied the student-centered principle, the combination of speaking and listening principle, production-oriented approach and the integration of high-tech principle into practice, the following four teaching methods are considered effective in our listening, speaking and viewing classes. First, teachers may ask questions using different expressions, and students may answer by repeating the questions first, giving the key words afterwards, and giving the full sentence finally. Second, teachers may ask students to repeat sentences or retell short passages. Teachers may pick up proper sentences from textbooks and clue students in by splitting the sentences into several parts. Students may practice in pairs and show in front of the class. For short passages, teacher may provide the structure of the passage on the computer screen. Students retell by referring to the structure. Third, teachers may ask students to role-play and conduct group discussions. Teachers may give clear instructions and evaluating criteria, offer raw materials, skills and advice. Fourth, for senior students, teachers may use flipped class teaching strategy. Teachers have to form groups to work together to get them ready. By applying these above four teaching methods, the students are sure to benefit and flourish.

References

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