

## Thoughts on "Yangsi Teaching Experience"

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**Abstract:** The Yangsi Middle School in Taixing City, Jiangsu Province, has started a huge and influential teaching reform in Chinese educational system, whose main teaching method in class is: "teaching after learning; training and discussing in the classroom". This new method of teaching mode has an important role in Chinese educational reform.

### 1. Introduction

The Yangsi Middle School, which was once a "three-stream condition, third-rate teachers with third-rate student sources" rural junior high school, has achieved a great deal of improvement and progress in innovating the direction of modern education. This paper will have deep thoughts on "Yangsi Teaching Experience" and try to have a research and investigation into the college English class teaching, whose traditional teaching methods in class can not satisfy and meet the demands of the new inquires of college English teaching.

### 2. The Content and Significance of "Yangsi Teaching Experience"

#### 2.1. The development and model of Yangsi Middle School

Yangsi Middle School was originally a rural junior middle school in Taixing City, Jiangsu Province, which was founded in 1980. At that time, there were only 2 rows of teaching buildings, overall five classes and one public teacher whose payment was directly from the government, four private teachers and eight substitute teachers, with less than 200 students in the whole school. The current Yangsi Middle School is located in the urban area of Taixing, with a huge area of 72,000 square meters' teaching buildings, totally 68 classes, 235 teachers, including the public, private and substitute teachers. There are more than 3,600 students. It is nowadays widely regarded as a miracle in the educational sector. All these developments and changes start from the principal of the school, Cai Linsen who has been the principal of Yangsi Middle School from 1982 and a farther of three children. It was said that his children's academic performance was not satisfactory in the primary schools and their teachers did not think highly of them. The children later went to study in the Yangsi Middle School and they have gained a great deal of progress in study. The Yangsi Middle School has always been the best and highest in the middle schooling in Taixing City, in terms of the enrollment rate, consolidation rate, graduation rate and pass rate of the students. For many years, because of the miracle in the teaching methods created by Yangsi Middle School, people have called the educational model of Yangsi Middle School "Yangsi Teaching Experience", and the teaching experience of Yangsi Middle School is becoming more and more famous throughout the country. The local newspapers and other newspapers across the country have conducted comprehensive coverage of Yangsi Education. Since 1994, 800,000 people have come to the school to do research and study.

Yangsi Middle School has become a model of education in Suzhou Province and even the whole country. The development of Yangsi Middle School is inseparable from its educational reform. Yangsi Middle School has undergone a reform trilogy. The first phase of the teaching reform was in the 1980s, when the school was founded and the principal Cai Linsen implemented the teaching responsibility system throughout the school. The teachers in each class not only tried to teach the students in the class, but also tried to let students master and remember what they learned in each class. The second phase of the teaching reform was to make up a three-year education reform

program in 1992. All the teachers tried to gather, practice, share, accumulate and improve the teaching experiences and after a very time of practice and accumulation, formed the essence of the teaching method: “teaching after learning; training and discussing in the classroom“. The third phase began in 1997, reforming the school-running mechanism, enhancing the brand effect and opening a “life curriculum“ to enable students to learn independently, take care of themselves, and improve their self-confidence in all aspects.

## **2.2. The Teaching Mode of Yangsi Middle School**

“Teaching after learning; training and discussing in the classroom”, as an efficient classroom teaching mode, is the core of the experience of Yangsi Middle School. "First learning" means that the teachers first guide the students to read the textbooks in class, and then have the students conduct self-learning and self-discussion in groups to enhance the effects of teaching. “Second teaching“ refers to the group discussion after the students learning the texts and finishing the teachers’ assignments first. The students change their roles in the classroom considerably from the previously passive learners to the active ones and at the same time, the teachers change their roles in the classroom from the previously the so-called spoon-feed-teachers to the organizers and guides of the classroom.

However, this effective teaching mode is not a very simple matter to achieve. It is necessary to pay attention to several aspects. First of all, in the classroom, teachers should precisely and simply tell students about the teaching objectives of the lessons, and correctly guide students to self-study. In the process of the students’ self-study, teachers constantly patrol, encourage the students, and help the students solve problems in time by giving inquiries and guidance. For the teacher's post-teaching, the teachers should clearly cover the common problems of the students and skip the parts of knowledge that the students master. While the teachers’ teaching, it is necessary to clarify the rules of how to study and why to solve the problems in that way.

This kind of new teaching method asks the students to be completely involved in the teaching procedures and put an end to the disadvantages of the traditional teaching mode, especially when the teachers try to insert every knowledge into the students’ cells.

## **3. Thoughts on "Yangsi Teaching Experience"--The Influence of College English Classroom Teaching Reform**

### **3.1. The Disadvantages of Traditional Teaching Methods**

The development of Yangsi experience and its recognition of the society and the education sector have produced new understandings and reflections on the traditional teaching model. Traditional teaching is often regarded as “instilling education“, which is widely considered a model of exam-oriented teaching mode. The traditional teaching mode or the so-called "teach for the test; learn for the test." , examination-oriented education refers to the education that deviates from the actual needs of human and social development, and simply strives for the high scores and pursues the rate of enrollment. Test-oriented education focuses on the indoctrination of knowledge, not on the learning and development of students' innovative and practical abilities. Students lack the enthusiasm of inspiration. The traditional teaching methods generally include teaching new courses, reviewing examination-related points, practicing important words and phrases and doing teachers’ assignments. In an exam-oriented classroom, all the teachers and the students care about is the memorizing and the final scores. Over the years, people have talked more about the drawbacks of traditional education.

Moreover, in the traditional teaching mode classrooms, the relationship between students and teachers is not equal. Students have no initiative in learning, and do not need and inspire innovation and enthusiasm. the teachers are “Everything and Soul“ in the classroom, and the students are only passively accepted. However, the drawbacks of this traditional teaching method and exam-oriented education in the new stage and new requirements are increasing. The requirements for cultivating innovative and independent practical talents need to be reformed and modified. The experience of

Yangsi Middle School is abandoning traditional teaching methods. It fundamentally changes the relationship between students and teachers in the classroom, guiding students not to passively accept knowledge and to actively learn knowledge, so that students become the main body of the classroom, and teachers become the organizers of the classroom.

### **3.2. Reflections on the Reform of College English Teaching Methods**

The College English Curriculum Requirements requires the changes of the learners' learning styles and the promotion of the learners' independent study habits and capacities, including the collaborative and inquiry learning. It is required that all the institutions of higher education should make full use of modern information technology and adopt a computer-based and classroom-based English teaching models to improve the single teaching mode just based on the teachers' teaching. The new teaching mode should be supported by modern information technology, so that English teaching and learning can not be restricted to the extent of time and place and will inspire the learners' individualization and independent learning. The new teaching mode should reflect the principles of combining the practices of knowledge with fun of English teaching, which will help mobilize the enthusiasm of both the teachers and the students, especially help create the students' main position in the teaching process. While making full use of modern information technology, we must reasonably inherit the excellent parts of the traditional teaching mode and give full play to the advantages of traditional classroom teaching. In the classroom, students must study and learn to test themselves. The teacher is no longer the main body of the class but the students. The students find the inner self-inspired learning from the passive learning. .

For the reform of college English classroom teaching, teachers can adopt an interactive teaching mode to make students become the main body of the classroom. Teachers should not take up the time of the class too long, instead they tend to solve the knowledge and problems that the students do not know, and do not expect to repeat the knowledge familiar with the students. To focus on the role of group discussions, improve the abilities of student group cooperation and self-solving problems, teachers should clarify the teaching objectives of each section, through students' self-study, teachers' explanation and group discussion, and some tests according to the contents of the class. let Students do some self-tests and self-evaluation to see if they have achieved the purposes of learning and teaching in the classroom, so that students become the masters of classroom learning. Of course, students may have been accepting an indoctrinated education model. They have become accustomed to sitting there and listening to the teachers while just taking some notes in the classroom. At the end of each semester, they will get a mark of the subject in the final exam. Therefore, this kind of teaching reform needs to develop step by step, but it must be done and not just be discussed the theoretical knowledge and not just to stop with theoretical knowledge. The reform of college English teaching requires the constant efforts of educators, especially the efforts of the teachers.

### **4. The Specific Application of “Teaching after Learning; Training and Discussing in the Classroom” in College English Class**

The traditional college English classroom teaching model can no longer meet the new requirements of college English in the new era. This paper takes the teaching method of “Teaching after learning; training and discussing in the classroom” as the main method of teaching in the "Yangsi Teaching Experience". Now the paper takes an explanation of one unit in the college English class as an example to see how to apply the teaching experience in the college English class. The title of this text A is: Father Knows Better, which is a drama discussing the generation gap between two generations, especially between the parents and their children. Before the teacher teaches this unit in class, the teacher shows and demonstrates clearly the teaching objectives and class tasks to the whole class. The teacher makes sure that these tasks not only meet the teaching objectives of the unit, but also adjust to the English levels of the students in the class and the actual situations of their acceptance and completion of the tasks. The teaching tasks for the students to discuss and study are as follows: 1) Have students talk about the situations of Chinese generation

gap and explain this issue by using their own experiences or some examples around them. 2) Have students talk about how to solve the problems of generation gap between themselves and the previous generation, especially their parents. 3) Have students discuss the Western generation gap problems (generally speaking, students have less understanding of the Western generation gap problems, since they may know little about the western situations of generation gap, which will be shown by the teachers or will be shown in the text A) 4) Have students look through the drama to understand and analyze the generation gap problems in the western world and try to get the general idea and structure of the drama, like the number of the examples of generation gap, the scenes in the drama, the characters, time, place, events of each scene, 5) Have students learn the important vocabulary of the Text A and the difficult sentences. 6) Have students answer the questions of the text in the textbook and write down the answers.

After the teacher has arranged the tasks, the students begin to study in groups. In this process, the teacher walks back and forth in the class to observe the situations of the students during the discussion, and can participate in the discussion process of the students if necessary. Through discussions with the groups, the students first solve the five questions assigned by the teacher and try to write the results down or form an oral presentation. After the students have discussed the five questions, they can communicate with each other to share the results and the problems they encounter during the discussion and wonderful points they feel. After the students finish the discussion in groups and basically complete the five tasks, The teacher begins to solve the problems one by one, and ask each group to elect some to present the answers in class and then the whole class tries to get the best solutions to the five questions. By doing so, the teacher will expect different answers of the questions according to the the different answers of the groups. For example, there is an important phrase in the text: at any rate and different groups of students have different way of understanding. Let us see several groups of understanding of the phrase. The first group: first of all, the Chinese meaning of this phrase is "anyway" and we often use the word "cost" at the phrase "at any cost", "at all costs ". What's more, the word cost can also be used as a noun and a verb. The second group: the meaning of this phrase is: "in any case" and the word "rate" means "the ratio, speed". We generally use the word "rate" in the phrases "at the rate of" or "the rate of employment and the rate of unemployment"

The students get the answers to the teachers' questions just through the textbook or the knowledge of their own not with the help of any electronic device such as the cellphones or the Internet. This will encourage and inspire them to rely on themselves or the group members.

## 5. Conclusion

Yangsi education is the starting point of a new era of education, not the end. The reform of the teaching mode of modern education is imperative. The traditional teaching model is not suitable for the new social and educational requirements, which require teaching reforms. How to reform? what is the right direction and what is the way out for reform? Today's Yangsi teaching model offers us a correct direction and plays an important and good role in Chinese modern teaching reform programs. This article is simply studying the teaching mode from the prospects of the development and model of Yangsi education, which throws bricks to us think about the modern education of college English classroom, from the teaching purposes, teaching methods, teaching methods, teachers and students' status and role in classroom. As we all know that teaching reform is quite necessary and definitely has a long way to go.

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