

A Study on College English Mobile Learning Teaching Strategies Based on Smart-phone Applications

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Abstract. With the development of information technology, Micro-course, Wisdom Class, Massive Open Online Courses, and so on have emerged. Smart-phones, as one of the modern mobile learning devices, come to learners' rescue to get access to those brand-new learning styles. Students can more easily achieve autonomous learning anytime, anywhere with smart-phone apps. In the teaching practice and experience, there still exists some problems in the traditional process of English teaching in college, such as single English teaching model, rigid English learning methods and "dumb" English. This paper proposes some teaching methods that combine smart-phone apps with mobile English learning. These strategies can enhance students' self-control and self-learning ability and improve the efficiency of English teaching.

Keywords. Smart-phone Apps; Mobile learning; Learning strategies

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1. 1. Mobile Learning and Mobile Learning Environment

1.1. Definition and features of mobile learning

The Researchers have different definitions of the concept of mobile learning due to different perspectives. From a technical point of view, Paul Harris[1] pointed out that "mobile learning is the intersection of mobile computing technology and network learning, which can support learners to learn anytime, anywhere without being restricted by time and space." From the perspective of learning styles, mobile learning refers to a new learning method in which people use mobile terminals to learn because of the mobility and uncertainty of time and space, and the need for flexible learning. Mobile learning in this study refers to a learning method that is not restricted by time and space with the help of mobile devices such as smart phones and tablet computers. As a new learning model, mobile learning has the following features compared with the traditional learning models:

Different from traditional teaching or distance teaching, mobile learning has much more flexibility and autonomy allowing learners to be unrestricted by time and place. Because the learning locations and learning tools of mobile learning are all movable, learners can study anytime, anywhere, and can choose learning tools according to their own needs. They are no longer confined to classroom learning or textbook learning any more. Whether in class or after class, on the bus or waiting in line, learners

can use their spare time to learn anytime and anywhere, which is also conducive to learners to arrange learning tasks according to their own schedule. Consequently, personalized learning can be achieved. Mobile learning is an interactive learning style, which provides learners with good opportunities for communication. With the help of mobile devices, accessible to the Internet, and convenient social software, learners can communicate with teachers or peers in a timely manner. Therefore it is conducive for learners to have communication and interaction with others in self-study. The interactivity of mobile learning is mainly manifested in the following aspects: the interaction between the learner and the teacher, the interaction between the learners, and the interaction between the learner and the smart-phone Apps. Through the different kinds of interaction, the teacher can obtain feedback from the learner in time and learners can enhance their evaluation ability and cooperative learning ability. At the same time, learners also need to answer the questions provided by the mobile learning Apps. After the learner completes the tasks of the “Fluent English”, an English speaking App, the system will give real-time feedback on the learning effect of learners.

The learning tools in mobile learning are characterized by universality and portability. In recent years, mobile terminal devices have developed rapidly. Today’s mobile terminal devices such as smart phones and tablet computers are very small and portable and can be carried around. The development of mobile wireless communication technologies such as WLAN and 4G technology ensures that learners can learn anytime and anywhere as long as they can access to the Internet. It’s true that many mobile learning Apps provide offline download functions to ensure that learners can study English anytime and anywhere without an access to the Internet.

1.2. Mobile Learning Environment

The mobile learning environment is inseparable from the technical support of the network and mobile devices. It is a new type of teaching environment that is supported by Wi-Fi, a system for connecting electronic equipment to the internet without using wires, or mobile data. Learners use mobile devices and other tools to obtain, interact, transfer, and share knowledge and information anytime and anywhere. The mobile learning environment includes mobile learning network access technology, mobile learning platforms and systems, mobile learning resources and mobile learning terminal equipment. In this research, the mobile learning environment can be created by using mobile devices such as the smart phones and tablets.

2. Brief Introduction to Several Learning Apps

In the field of language learning, mobile learning brought a new learning method and language input to students. This part will give a general analysis of mobile learning apps used frequently in language learning including *Youdao Dictionary*, *LiuLiShuo* and *Chaoxing Learning Platform*.

2.1. Youdao Dictionary

Youdao Dictionary is a language app that integrates translation, reading, and spoken language by using the technology of search engine. Through the function of its original network interpretation, Youdao Dictionary covers the popular vocabulary on the Internet and a large number of examples. In terms of inclusion of words, it is a complete collection of data from many authoritative dictionaries such as *21st Century Unabridged English-Chinese Dictionary* and *Collins: Learner’s English-Chinese Dictionary*. The vocabulary can be translated into many languages. Besides it supports vocabulary query and translation with detailed explanations and examples and provides synonyms and antonyms of vocabulary, as well as the same root vocabulary. Different from traditional dictionary, learners can take photos of new words and sentences when looking up the dictionary, which makes language learning more convenient and time-saving. Moreover this dictionary features its voice translation, online classroom, article reading and so on.

2.2. LiuLiShuo

LiuLiShuo is a spoken English learning app that integrates innovative oral teaching concepts and high technology about speech assessment. Its English courses combines the best technology with a neuroscience-based learning theory RHR (Recursive Hierarchical Recognition Theory) proposed by Lance Knowles. When conceiving its product, his goal is to make it the best and most effective English learning app. This oral English learning app is characterized by its personalized placement test, then it proposes a personalized learning plan. Through the immersing experience, students learn to process language in chunks, rather than individual words. This is the key to developing fluency. The lessons in this app take the advantage of the human-technology interface, while other apps just show pictures, text or translations like in a book. What's more, with the study data, it can track your progress and set clear goals for learners. Because the learning sequence is unique and hierarchical, it will accelerate learning, so students can feel their progress. More important, it provides a game-based oral practice, which is welcome for many learners. Despite the fact that it is an oral English app, it also introduces the vocabulary learning function. The learning content of the vocabulary is different based on the different learners according to their learning goals and interest. For instance, as a college student, it is necessary to make preparation for many English examinations. LiuLiShuo covers a variety of vocabulary lists for college students, such as postgraduate vocabulary, CET4 and CET6, IELTS and TOEFL. In the case of graduates and adults, their interest might cover a wide range, such as basketball must-know vocabulary, software development core vocabulary, artificial intelligence core vocabulary, financial vocabulary, etc. In a word, as for this app the oral skills, listening and speaking, come first, followed by reading and writing.

2.3. Chaoxing Learning Platform

Chaoxing Learning Platform is a multi-functional personalized learning app developed by Chaoxing Group. It aims to meet the needs of learners in the mobile Internet era. Chaoxing Learning Platform not only contains the abundant digital education resources accumulated by Chaoxing, but also integrates complete network teaching functions and course interaction plug-ins, which can realize mobile teaching, live classroom and multi-screen interaction. Based on knowledge, interest, and learning, the core concept of Chaoxing Learning Platform is to integrate, share and socialize with numerous resources.

Chaoxing Learning Platform organically combines the advantages of online teaching platform and mobile social software. At the same time this learning app avoids the shortcomings of both. Compared with the traditional online teaching platform, Chaoxing Learning Platform provides more diversified platform support, with more timely dynamic reminders, simpler login methods, more organized resource management, and closer online and offline teaching activities. Compared with social software such as WeChat and QQ, Chaoxing Learning Platform provides more professional learning services, with less information interference, and a more systematic form of course organization. In addition, the registration and use of Chaoxing Learning Platform is also very convenient, which is more popular among college students. In summary, the application of Chaoxing Learning Platform in college English classrooms has its unique functional advantages.

3. The Specific Application of Mobile Apps in English Teaching

The specific application of smart-phone apps in college English teaching is mainly reflected in reading teaching, vocabulary teaching, listening teaching, oral teaching, writing and translation teaching, etc. This paper will choose the three learning apps mentioned above to explore their functions and use respectively in English reading teaching and oral teaching.

3.1. Application of Chaoxing Learning Platform in Intensive Reading Teaching

Compared with traditional reading teaching, English teaching assisted by smart phone apps breaks the traditional teaching mode. This new teaching mode is carried out in various forms and rich in content,

which fully mobilized the students' enthusiasm and interest in learning. They are links between teachers and students in the forty-five minutes of class. To sum up, the use of smart phone apps in reading teaching can make up for many shortcomings of traditional teaching.

In order to improve students engagement in class, Chaoxing Learning Platform has many interactive functions covering all classroom teaching activities, such as sign-in, answering, quiz, voting, multi-screen interaction, class report.

Before class, teachers can organize teaching content on Chaoxing Learning Platform in advance based on the teaching plan. For example, teachers can arrange teaching activities such as pop-ups, check-in, question and answer, voting, etc. in an orderly manner. In this way can students make good preparations for the new lesson and it is more convenient for classroom distribution and easy to reuse.

In class, teachers release the teaching materials like *warming up*, *presentation of reading*, *reading practice* they designed to students through the "tasks" or "homework/tests" in the Activities (a functional item of Chaoxing Learning Platform) and ask them to complete them within the given time. If students encounter difficulties in the process of learning, he or she can initiate a discussion with the teacher and classmates in the "group chat" to interact with each other to solve them together or search for relevant learning resources on the Internet. Through using smart phone apps in class, the class will be more efficient and the learning atmosphere will be more relaxed and highly rich.

After class, teachers can release their own classroom teaching courseware to "course materials" for students to review after class, which can also save a lot of time and effort in class to copy the teacher's notes and therefore lose the opportunity to concentrate on listening to the class and participating in the classroom. What's more, teachers can also assign extracurricular learning content such as customs and culture related to the West on Chaoxing Learning Platform, which can enrich students' knowledge and expand English learning channels.

3.2. Table

Smart phones can create a virtual English language environment for oral English teaching due to their powerful network functions, such as repeated oral English practice through various mobile phone oral apps. More important, traditional oral English teaching assisted by smart phone apps provides a harmonious and effective learning atmosphere for students, enables students to have an experience of immersive engagement. At the same time, it can fully mobilize the enthusiasm of the majority of students, and stimulate their interest in oral English learning. Practice has showed that this experiential oral teaching method has overturned the traditional oral teaching mode, and is deeply loved by students and has been highly praised.

In oral English teaching, teachers can use one smart phone learning app LiuLiShuo to aid oral teaching. Before class, according to the learning theme or topic, teachers set the preview content via LiLiShuo. After the completion of students' study, teachers adjust the preparation of lessons based on the students' learning situation. When one lesson is finished in class, teachers set up about 20 minutes of oral practice review on the app to consolidate the content learned on the day. In terms of homework, teachers can check their learning progress on the app. In addition, teachers set up English learning groups, in which students share their voice-over works. Then teachers judge the work and give scores, and excellent or honored students can be rewarded each month.

The new English teaching method combined with oral learning apps such as LiLiShuo, just meets the psychological needs of young students' learning motivation. Youngsters, as the rising waves of the time, like to challenge all kinds of creation and invention in our life. They love to show themselves, to take photos, videos, etc. Combined with LiuLiShuo, oral English

class become increasingly interesting and fascinating. And you can practice spoken English anytime, anywhere. It is particularly important that this new teaching model can be evaluated and practiced in a targeted and timely manner. Finally, students can witness their improvement in oral English, and enhance their self-confidence.

4. Measures and Solutions to Ensure English Teaching Assisted by Smart Phone Apps

Teaching is a bilateral activity between teachers and students. It is a very complex project that requires support and engagement from society, educational departments and schools, etc. In order to ensure the effective application of smart phones in college English teaching, the following safeguards must be taken:

First, the infrastructure for intelligent teaching needs to be invested more. Multimedia equipment is an information-based teaching hardware facilities, which can connect to the network, computers and smart phone. Second, the investment in running the smart phone apps teaching platform should be increased as well. To ensure that smart phone teaching really enters the classroom, there needs a mobile learning professional platform for smart phone mobile terminals. This platform helps school teachers solve problems such as mobile teaching and student mobile learning. Therefore, schools need to pay for the teaching applications and resources and invite educational and training experts to the school to have the negotiation about training and cooperation.

Second, the improvement of English teachers' professionalism is much necessary. Teachers play a leading role in teaching. The teacher's attitude and ability is the key to the new teaching mode. Breaking the traditional English teaching model and strengthening the smart phone English teaching awareness, teachers to should attach great importance to it and in practice teachers should be bold in educational view and methods. For many years, the traditional English teaching model has been deeply ingrained in teachers' thinking, and smart phone teaching is a brand-new model for teachers. Therefore, teachers need to liberate traditional teaching ideas and strengthen the awareness of the mobile teaching.

Finally, students are the principal part in the implementation of smart phone teaching, and their own awareness plays a key role in the effective teaching. Therefore, in order to ensure the quality of smart phone teaching, students' participation is needed. To ensure the effectiveness of smart phone teaching, it is necessary to ensure that students correctly use smart phones reasonably, and strengthen the guidance of their use of smart phones. To train students to treat the use of smart phones rationally from a high level of ideological interpretation, teachers need to help students analyze the harm of smart phone abuse and help them have a clear idea about the positive role of mobile phones.

5. Conclusion

In short, students' learning becomes more intelligent and easily accessible with the development of science and technology. Using English learning apps, such as Youdao Dictionary, LiuLiShuo, Chaoxing Learning Platform etc., learners can easily accept the massive English learning resources provided by the Internet. Smart phones are becoming the main tool for people to learn English. Therefore college English learning and teaching should be changed as well. To keep up with the trend teachers in college should explore and practice actively in the mobile learning teaching aided by considerable smart phone apps.

Conflicts of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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