

The Application of Cooperative Learning in Teaching the Continuation Task in Senior High School

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Abstract

Writing ability is the embodiment of a student's comprehensive English ability, which can best reflect a student's English foundation, and is also a difficult point in senior high school English teaching. The implementation of the continuation task is also demanding for students. Thus, applying the cooperative learning into the English writing class to enable students to improve their English writing.

Keywords

Cooperative learning; Continuation task; Senior high school English.

1. Introduction

The traditional teaching situation of English writing in senior high school in China is not worth advocating, and most teachers just ask students to recite the template to cope with the exam, which makes students lose their interest in writing gradually and learn writing passively. It's quite significant for teachers to use the appropriate teaching method in writing class. Cooperative learning aims to prompt students' enthusiasm in learning and improve their abilities. Based on the new curriculum reform, this paper applies the cooperative learning in teaching the continuation task in senior high school to improve students' writing ability.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The definition of cooperative learning

Cooperative learning is a teaching strategy system designed to promote students' cooperation in heterogeneous groups, achieve common learning objectives, and reward the group's overall results. (Wang Tan, 2002) [1]

Cooperative learning refers that teachers apply this kind of teaching method and make learners learn together in groups and prompt their cognition and emotion. (Lin Xinshi, 2008)[2]

A study group of two or more students formed to arouse the enthusiasm and initiative of students, to promote the interaction between teachers and students, and to achieve teaching objectives. (Wang Sanjin, 2018)[3]

Based on the above definitions, we may safely draw a conclusion that cooperative learning is an interactivity among students in groups and aims to prompt their enthusiasm in learning and improve their abilities.

2.2. The continuation task

The continuation task is a writing task that combines reading and comprehension. Students need to read an article without the story ending and creatively supplement the ending by fully utilizing their imagination while understanding the content of the text. "The core concept of the continuation task is alignment, which refers to the psychological process in which the conversational parties constantly adjust their mental and linguistic representations for communicative needs and adapt to each other to achieve efficient communication. The

continuation task combined with production and understanding is affected by alignment.” (Pickering & Garrod, 2004)[4] According to the new college entrance examination of recent years, the reading materials is more of narrative. The difficulty of reading materials should meet the language level of students, and there is a certain length of more than 500 words. The selection of reading materials before conducting the class of the continuation task is quite significant. “In the context of China, the continuation task, a new form of an integrated reading-writing task that requires learners to read and continue an incomplete story, is increasingly favored in language pedagogy and assessment” (Shi, B. , Huang, L. , & Lu, X. , 2020) [5]

3. The application of cooperative learning in the continuation task

English writing is the significant output of English learning. The continuation task is the development and improvement of the English writing. It's necessary to employ the appropriate teaching method in teaching the continuation task. Cooperative learning can play an important role in prompting students' ability to learn and achieving learning goals. Thus, it's appropriate to apply cooperative learning in teaching the continuation task to prompt students' writing ability and achieve the goals of the continuation task.

During this writing class, the students are divided into different groups. Each group have outgoing and quiet students.

Step 1 Lead-in

The teacher provides students with corresponding reading situations, leading to the topic of the reading materials to be explained next. The teacher asks the students to predict the reading materials. Students can discuss with their group members. Then, the teacher invites students from different groups to share their predictions.

Step 2 Text Analysis

Firstly, in terms of the content of the reading materials, the teacher asks the students to work in group and guides students to sort out the content of the article and clarify the story context. The teacher asks the students to read the text quickly and identify the genre of the text: narrative, expository, argumentative, etc. Then the teacher asks students to find out the main idea of the article, and sort out the core information and story development context of the article by '5W+1H'.

Secondly, in terms of the structure of the reading materials, the teacher guide students to pay attention to the layout and coherence of reading materials in the process of reading.

Thirdly, in terms of the language of the reading materials, the teacher mainly guides students to learn the vocabulary and beautiful sentence expression of the reading materials, and then they can use these beautiful words and sentences in the continuation of writing, increasing the diversity of language.

Step 3 Brainstorming

Firstly, the teacher asks each group to imagine and discuss the opening sentences of the continuing paragraphs and make an outline. Secondly, the teacher asks the students to imagine and discuss the ending of the story based on their own understanding of the previous text. Then, the teacher asks each group to report the outcome of their discussion. During the process of each group's report, the teacher can write down their opinions towards the possible plots on the blackboard. Meanwhile, the teacher points out the inappropriate opinions and ask each group to discuss the reasons of the inappropriateness with their group members.

Step 4 Individual Writing

Students are asked to complete the continuation task based on the given opening sentences and the related opinions of the brainstorming. Students need to focus on the content, the structure

and the language of their compositions based on the text analysis organized by the teacher and the brainstorming.

Step 5 Evaluation

Firstly, students are asked to evaluate their compositions individually. For example, they can pay attention to the use of the expressions and words. Secondly, the teacher asks the students to evaluate their group members' compositions. They should point out the advantages and disadvantages of their group members' compositions. They should learn the advantages from the group members and offer their suggestions of modifying the compositions better to their group members through the peer evaluation. Every student should evaluate the compositions of all their group members so that they can learn more from their group members and have a better understanding of their own common mistakes to prompt their writing. Thirdly, students are asked to modify and reorganize their compositions based on self-evaluation and peer evaluation to improve their compositions. Finally, students hand in their final compositions and the teacher evaluate the compositions.

4. Conclusion

Based on the implementation of the continuation task, it's significant to enhance teaching quality of writing. The application of the cooperative learning in the continuation task can arouse students' interest in writing and help students learn from each other to improve their writing ability. Thus, it's advisable to apply the cooperative learning into the continuation task to improve students' writing ability.

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