

# On the Cultivation of Critical thinking ability in College English Class

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**Abstract**— *The cultivation of critical thinking ability in college English class refers to the cultivation of critical thinking ability that is suitable for college English teaching objectives through direct or indirect learning. How to use the organic combination of the "task-based", "project-based" and "cooperative learning" methods in the classroom to encourage more students to think critically and cultivate more outstanding talents with innovative thinking has become the goal and direction of our college English educators to focus on thinking and exploring.*

**Keywords**— *college English; innovation; critical thinking ability.*

Critical thinking ability is in essence a kind of rethinking, which is a review, evaluation and revision of the thought that has been produced (Stratton 1999:10). The cultivation of critical thinking ability is the fundamental task of higher education and an indispensable part of university study (Moore 2011). The national medium-and long-term education reform and development plan (2010-2020) promulgated by the Ministry of education also clearly points out that education "should improve students' innovative spirit of bold exploration and practical ability to solve problems, and pay attention to the combination of learning and thinking." "Critical thinking ability" is the foundation of "innovative ability" and the premise of "innovative spirit".

The cultivation of critical thinking ability in college English class refers to the cultivation of critical thinking ability that is suitable for college English teaching objectives through direct or indirect learning. (Lin Xiao, 2017)

## I. NECESSITY

Peng Qinglong (2000) stressed that "the overall foreign language level of Chinese college students has greatly improved, but their language communication ability, especially their ability to speak and write, is still very poor. The outstanding performance is that they have nothing to say in oral communication, or they are incoherent, or they only know one or the other, they do not know how to write,

the theme is not prominent, and their views are not clear." In fact, the students have improved their input abilities such as reading, but they generally lack their own ideas and logical reasoning when confronted with such output contents as spoken and written. This leads to college students being unable to find problems, think about or creatively solve problems in their work after graduation.

The main reason for this phenomenon is that it has long been influenced by examination-oriented education and the culture of moderation. In exam-oriented education, students value examination results. The only goal for many students to teach college English is to pass CET-4 and CET-6. In addition, teachers teach "cramming" and only impart knowledge. The teaching method is still the same as teaching words, sentence patterns and paragraphs. No time is allowed for students to think in the process. This teaching method is far from the goal of cultivating critical thinking ability. At the same time, modesty and prudence are emphasized in the moderation culture, and children cannot question the authority and dignity of teachers. This kind of classroom atmosphere, which allows students to listen more and remember more, and teachers "speak with one voice", severely limits the cultivation of their innovative thinking ability.

## II. THE SOLUTION

The teaching goal of college English is "to cultivate students' comprehensive English application ability,

especially their listening and speaking ability, so that they can communicate effectively in English in their future study, work and social communication, and at the same time enhance their autonomous learning ability and improve their comprehensive cultural literacy, so as to meet the needs of China's social development and international communication." (Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education 2007:1)

The teaching requirements for college English courses clearly stipulate that college English courses "have both instrumental and humanistic characteristics." (Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, 2007) Instrumentality refers to the teaching of foreign language knowledge to students and the training of students' listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating skills in foreign languages. Humanistic goal is to cultivate students' cross-cultural communication ability and improve their comprehensive cultural accomplishment. This shows that in addition to the instrumental function of language, it is also important to cultivate comprehensive cultural literacy, including the ability to identify and recognize various ideas and viewpoints, which ultimately enables students to become more independent thinkers and cross-cultural communicators.

Therefore, college English teaching should not only pay attention to the artistry of language expression, but also the ideological content of language content. In other words, we should not only pay attention to the accuracy of the language, but also focus on the cultivation of the critical expression ability of the language.

#### 1. Innovating teaching concepts

College English teaching requires both instrumental and humanistic features of language. In college English classes, "thinking" in "innovative thinking ability" has a wide range of instructions, including "thinking about what to teach" and "how to teach" at the level of language knowledge. "Debate" refers to the discussion and debate on topics related to students' learning life and texts based on "thinking". Therefore, the original form of classroom teaching based on language ability training is no longer suitable for students' quality education goals. It is a new requirement for college English teaching in the new era to establish the educational concept of "student-oriented" and train students to become English learners with innovative

and critical abilities.

#### 2. Innovating teaching methods

The traditional college English class is still a teacher teaching language knowledge, mostly in the form of "full house filling", and students' learning enthusiasm is not enough. Only by truly teaching students in the classroom, mobilizing students' subjective initiative and creativity, making students the real subjects in the classroom, and using cooperative learning methods such as task-based and project-based teaching methods, can students be snatched from the front of the mobile phone screen and the "bow-down clan" in the classroom be reduced.

#### 3. Innovating teaching environment

Students have formed the habit of listening to lectures passively by listening to lectures and memorizing more. This kind of long silent class results in students being lazy in thinking. In fact, a relaxed and free classroom environment is the basis for students to develop their personalities. We should really teach students in the classroom, trust them and let them become the main body of the classroom. Teachers should give more encouragement and praise to students' advantages and innovative contents, and at the same time give guiding suggestions to help them gradually improve their thinking and innovative ability.

### III. SUMMARY

Modern university education cannot do without innovative thinking. Therefore, it has become the goal and direction of our college English educators to pay attention to think and explore how to use the organic combination of program, task, project and cooperative learning methods in the classroom to promote more students to think critically and cultivate more outstanding talents with innovative thinking.

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