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E-learning and English Teaching

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Abstract

The development of computer and information technology offers a favorable external environment for English teaching. There are more than 300 million learners of English in China. Information technology furnishes them with abundant teaching materials of English, which also provides an opportunity for teachers to change their pedagogical strategies so as to improve the efficiency of teaching and learning. This paper discusses the application and advantages of e-learning in English teaching, and analyses how to change the pedagogical strategies for teachers to improve teaching efficiency and enable students to master English as a second language quickly and effectively.

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1. Introduction

The Chinese people have been trying to learn foreign languages in the past 150 years and most of them learnt English. Countless people mastered English very well. Among them were architects, academics, politicians and diplomats. The main tools these people used were books, magazines and other paper materials. The luckiest students were those who sat in a classroom listening to foreign teachers in schools. About 30 years ago, tape recorders became popular in China and the Chinese people began using cassette tape recorders when learning English.

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In recent years, computer and Internet are widely used. Accordingly, teachers should adjust their pedagogical strategies to improve teaching efficiency. But, unfortunately, the majority of teachers have not realized such necessity of change that the current information technology has brought us, let alone to explore how to use information technology to change the status quo of low efficiency that the Chinese people have been learning English over the past three decades. This paper is to explore the application and advantages of e-learning in English teaching, analyses appropriate pedagogical strategies so as to improve students' learning efficiency, so that more students can master English as a second language.

2. The Advantages of E-learning in English Teaching

2.1. The Abundant Teaching Resources

Internet provides us with a tremendous wealth of teaching resources. We can easily find the text information, pictures and audio data on almost any topic we like.

Powerful tools, such as Google, Baidu and other search engines, can find a huge amount of information in any subject for us. It is very convenient and most of these information can be obtained free of charge. Part of the content has been turned into multimedia courseware. Learning becomes very convenient and interesting.

2.2. Easy Access to Information

We couldn't get our textbooks until the bookstores began to sell. Nowadays, we can immediately get from the Internet the teaching resources we need at low cost. It is unimaginable in the traditional agricultural society and industrial society.

When we hear the news of a person or event, we can find the relative information from the Internet. We can use the information as the teaching materials by appropriate pedagogical strategies. For example: Amy L. Chua, Professor of Law at Yale Law School, published her new work "Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother" which caused lively discussion on children's education both in China and the USA. If students are interested in this topic, they can immediately find the relevant information for learning and discussion.

A large number of high school and college students have cell phones now. Texts, images, sounds can be stored in their mobile phones. Students can read English articles and hear the voice. Such easy access to information creates a small environment for them to learn English. E-learning makes students learn English anywhere, anytime.

2.3. The Effect of Direct Interest

In psychology, the so-called "direct interest", is that caused by the needs of discovering the thing itself. Playing the role of direct interest in learning English is very important because it makes learning interesting and results in better performance owing to high degree of concentration.

For instance, Shanghai students, participating in the Program for International Student Assessment, which is given to 15-year-olds in about 64 countries, for the first time, landed at the top of the math, reading and science rankings. This result was echoed with unspeakable astonishment in the USA, but it is not big news in China. On the contrary, some people think this is not good news for Shanghai students because they are too tired in schools.

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