



Strategies and Recommendations to Enhance Online English Teaching Quality in Higher Vocational Colleges

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Abstract: The rapid growth of the Internet has propelled online teaching into a prominent position in higher education, including vocational English courses. Despite its widespread adoption, online teaching faces significant challenges compared to traditional classroom methods. This study delves into the current landscape of online teaching in vocational English courses, identifying key issues such as the lack of targeted course content, insufficient teaching resources, and low student participation. Drawing on a literature review and utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research methods, including questionnaire surveys and field observations, this study offers insights into the complexities of online teaching. Findings highlight the importance of improving teacher's technical abilities, fostering active student engagement, optimizing teaching resources and modes, and strengthening online teaching supervision. These strategies are pivotal in enhancing the quality of online teaching and paving the way for further advancements in vocational English education. Future research avenues include exploring innovative teaching models and leveraging emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and virtual reality to enrich the online teaching experience.

Keywords: higher vocational English, online teaching, quality improvement

Introduction

With the rapid development of the Internet and the continuous innovation of this technology, online teaching has become a prevailing practice at universities and colleges. As vocational English course plays an important role in cultivating the English application ability of vocational college students, English online teaching, as an emerging teaching model, is widely adopted in higher education field today. However, compared with traditional classroom teaching, the online teaching results in poor performance in many aspects. This article aims to conduct in-depth research and analysis to study the status quo and problems of online teaching in vocational English course, propose suggestions for improving online teaching, and promote the continuous improvement of the quality of online teaching in vocational English course. It is of great significance for the learning outcomes and future career development of the higher vocational college students.

Literature Review

It is quite necessary to study the relevant research of the online teaching of vocational English course. In order to improve teaching quality and the course development, many scholars in China have conducted much explorations on this issue:

Yang Yonglin (2019) discussed the changes in online English teaching from technical, scientific, and academic aspects^[1]; Zuo Wei (2020) believed that carrying out high-quality online teaching is the trend of higher education development^[2]; Xie Jun (2020) holds that online teaching has advantages such as diverse methods, flexibility, and convenience, but also lacks teacher-student interaction, and students lack self-discipline^[3]; Zhou Tao (2023) believed that the objective obstacles caused by the lack of physical presence, absence of school rituals, and asynchronous time and space in online teaching lead to many teachers developing pessimistic and even negative attitudes towards online teaching, making it difficult to create a good classroom atmosphere in online classrooms^[4], and so on.

Based on the previous research of these scholars, we adopted quantitative and qualitative research methods, combined with questionnaire surveys and field observations, and revealed some problems in current online English teaching.

On the one hand, there is a lack of targeted course content in online teaching. Due to the characteristics of online teaching, teachers often find it difficult to design targeted teaching based on individual diversities among those college students. Much of the course content fails to meet the needs of the students, which has exerted a certain impact on the learning outcomes of learners. In vocational English course, students are expected to master specific English skills and methods to meet the demand of future career development. However, in online teaching, due to the lack of effective course design and necessary guidance, the online English course is too generalized to satisfy the vocational students. Students feel very confused to fully understand and master the required knowledge and skills during online learning.

On the other hand, the shortage of professional teaching material in online teaching is also a problem. Online teaching requires various teaching resources, including textbooks, courseware, videos, etc. At present, there are still many colleges and teachers with insufficient preparation of online teaching resources, which has brought certain constraints to the quality of online teaching. In traditional face-to-face classroom teaching, teachers can conduct students' learning through immediate explanations, textbooks, and other auxiliary teaching resources. However, in online teaching, communication between teachers and students is limited, and it is inconvenient for the learners to have access to textbooks and other real teaching resources. Thus, it is difficult for teachers to impart knowledge effectively in online teaching, and students also struggle to reach sufficient learning resources.



The low participation of students in online teaching is another common problem. Due to the flexibility and autonomy of online teaching, our young students often lack initiative and enthusiasm in learning, resulting in poor academic outcomes. In traditional face-to-face teaching process, teachers stimulate students' interest and participation in learning through interactive teaching. However, in online teaching, due to the lack of face-to-face interaction and practical opportunities, students tend to feel isolated from the screen and lack motivation, leading to low enthusiasm and initiative in learning alone.

Through the analysis of the current situation of online teaching, we have found many problems like the lack of targeted course content, insufficient teaching resources, and low student participation in online teaching of vocational English course and so on. These problems are commonly existed in the online teaching process of vocational English course. These issues not only do harm to the learning effectiveness and development of the students, but also affect the quality and effectiveness of the English online teaching in higher vocational colleges.

Research Questions

The research questions in this study revolve around identifying and addressing the key challenges faced in online teaching of vocational English courses, including the lack of targeted course content, insufficient teaching resources, and low student participation, while also exploring strategies to improve the quality of online teaching by enhancing teacher's technical abilities, promoting students' active learning, optimizing teaching resources and modes, and strengthening online teaching supervision mechanisms.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this study combines quantitative and qualitative research methods to comprehensively investigate the status quo and challenges of online teaching in vocational English courses. The study utilizes a literature review to build upon existing research conducted by scholars in China regarding online English teaching, focusing on technical, scientific, and academic aspects, teacher-student interaction, self-discipline, and other pertinent factors. Additionally, the study incorporates quantitative methods such as questionnaire surveys and qualitative methods like field observations to gather data on the current online teaching practices, identify problems, and propose improvement measures.

Findings

1. Factors affecting the quality of online English teaching in vocational colleges

Teachers and students are the main subjects in online English teaching activities, and the teaching ability of teachers and the learning ability of students are two important factors that affect the quality of teaching.

1.1 Teacher's teaching ability and their technical requirements

The teaching ability of teachers can be specifically divided into professional ability and technical ability, which directly affects the quality of online teaching of vocational English course. In the following text, we will explore the professional abilities and technical needs of teachers from two aspects.

1.1.1 Professional competence of teachers

Online teaching of vocational English course requires high professional abilities from teachers. They are supposed to be armed with solid knowledge of English language and teaching skills to ensure the quality of curriculum teaching. Firstly, teachers should have a good command of English language and be able to use the language fluently and accurately in teaching; Secondly, teachers should have rich teaching experience and methods, and be able to design and implement effective teaching plans based on the different characteristics and needs of students; In addition, teachers also need to pay attention to student feedback during the teaching process and adjust teaching strategies in a timely manner based on feedback to improve teaching effectiveness.

1.1.2 Technical Requirements

Online teaching of vocational English course requires teachers to possess certain technical abilities and requirements. Firstly, teachers need to be proficient in the use of online teaching platforms, including the operation and functions of teaching software, as well as the use of online communication tools. Secondly, teachers have to possess such knowledge as network technology and be able to solve potential network failures and technical problems that may arise during the teaching process. In addition, teachers should continuously learn and update teaching techniques, paying close attention to the latest developments in educational technology in order to improve their teaching effectiveness.

The professional ability and technical requirements of teachers are important factors that affect the quality of online teaching in vocational English course. Schools and education departments should strengthen teacher training, establish a comprehensive teacher support system, provide advanced teaching equipment and technical support, and actively participate in teaching research and reform to continuously improve their teaching abilities and technical skills. Only in this way can they better meet the learning needs of students and improve the quality of online teaching of vocational English course.

1.2 Students' self-learning ability and learning environment

In the research on the current quality of online teaching in vocational English course, students' self-learning ability is an important aspect that cannot be ignored. This section will explore the impact of student learning environment on self-directed learning ability through multiple surveys and data analysis, and finally propose corresponding improvement measures.

The learning environment of students has a significant impact on their ability to learn independently. In online teaching,

students need to acquire knowledge and improve skills through self-directed learning. If the learning environment for students is not satisfactory, they may suffer from various difficulties and challenges. For example, students may face the problem of insufficient learning resources, including textbooks, reference books, learning tools, etc. Students will feel that the online learning environment is relatively loose, lacking discipline and self-discipline in learning. These factors may have a negative impact on students' ability to learn independently.

In order to improve students' self-learning ability, schools and teachers may take some measures accordingly. Firstly, teachers provide timely training and guidance on self-directed learning abilities to help students understand the importance of self-directed learning and master the methods and skills of self-directed learning. Secondly, teachers can stimulate students' interest in learning, cultivate their learning motivation, and promote the improvement of their self-learning ability. In addition, student learning groups or communities can be established to provide opportunities for collaborative learning, helping students learn and communicate with each other, thereby stimulating their ability for self-directed learning.

The learning environment and self-directed learning ability of students mutually influence each other. We can improve the learning environment for students, cultivate their self-learning ability, further enhance the quality of online English teaching, and promote the improvement of their learning effectiveness and abilities. Therefore, schools and teachers should attach importance to the cultivation of students' learning environment and self-learning ability, provide students with a good learning environment and opportunities to cultivate self-learning ability, and thus promote the development of online teaching in vocational English course.

2. Strategies for improving the quality of online English teaching in higher vocational colleges

2.1 Improvement of Teacher's Technical Ability

The improvement of teachers' technical abilities is crucial for the quality of higher vocational English online teaching. In the context of online teaching, information literacy is undoubtedly an important quality that every teacher in vocational colleges should possess^[5]. Teachers need to master certain technical knowledge and skills in online teaching, and get familiar with the usage methods and functions of various online teaching platforms. Only with solid technical skills can those teachers better utilize online teaching tools and resources, design and organize teaching activities, and as a result, provide high-quality teaching content and resources. Therefore, it is quite necessary to pay much attention to the technical training and ability enhancement of English teachers, in order to improve their professional competence and teaching effectiveness while they are working in online teaching. In terms of improving the teaching ability and technical requirements of teachers, the following measures will be of much help:

2.1.1 Strengthen teacher training. College authorities and education departments can organize relevant training and provide professional teacher training courses to help teachers improve their English language proficiency and teaching methods.

2.1.2 Establish a comprehensive teacher support system. Colleges can establish a teacher exchange platform to promote communication and cooperation among teachers, share teaching experience and resources.

2.1.3 Purchase and update teaching equipment. Advanced teaching tools and technical support are to be provided so as to meet the technical needs of the English teaching staff. Teachers should be encouraged to actively participate in teaching research and reform, pay attention to the latest developments in educational technology, continuously improve teaching methods, and enhance teaching effectiveness.

Through the implementation of the above measures, the teaching ability and technical requirements of teachers can be improved, thereby improving the quality of online teaching of vocational English course and providing high-quality educational services for college students.

2.2 Improvement of Students' Active Learning Ability

In online teaching, the active participation and positive learning attitude of students play a crucial role in the effectiveness of teaching. To increase student engagement, the following guidelines can be taken into consideration. Teachers can stimulate students' interest and initiative in learning by setting learning tasks and activities that encourage their participation. Teachers can utilize the interactive functions of online teaching platforms to engage in real-time interaction and discussion with students, promoting communication and interaction between students and teachers. Teachers can also stimulate students' learning motivation and interest, and improve their learning enthusiasm and participation by providing rich and diverse learning resources and teaching materials.

Meanwhile, the ability of students to learn independently is also a key factor. In online teaching, students need to have a certain degree of self-learning ability in order to better adapt to the learning environment and improve learning effectiveness. The ability of self-directed learning includes aspects such as self-management, self-learning, and self-evaluation, etc. Students need to learn how to make study plans, arrange their study time reasonably, and be able to learn independently. In addition, students are also expected to learn to utilize various learning resources, including online resources, library resources, etc., to improve learning effectiveness. At the same time, students should also have the ability of self-evaluation^[6], conduct self-reflection under the guidance of teachers, evaluate learning effectiveness, identify shortcomings, and take corresponding measures to improve.

2.3 Reasonable adjustment teaching resources and teaching modes

During the online teaching process, teachers should optimize online course teaching according to the current requirements of English teaching course, clarify the current situation of English teaching in vocational colleges based on student needs and reasonably select English course online teaching resources. By improving the online teaching mode of English course and a high-quality learning environment, the teacher will find it easy to promote the comprehensive development of the students. For example, for those students with poor English academic performance, teachers try to employ simpler

teaching content as the basis and help students master basic knowledge through micro lessons; While for those good at English, teachers provide them with challenging content. In short, by integrating current online resources, the teachers carry out targeted innovation with improved teaching models in order to guide students to learn actively. The students will cultivate good learning habits and improve their English literacy in practice.

2.4 Strengthening the supervision of online teaching

Teaching supervision is a process in which “supervision, learning, and management” interact to improve online teaching quality. Online teaching supervision should start from three aspects: teacher's teaching, student's learning, and school management. Throughout the process, it is necessary for college authorities to promote teaching management and control in a comprehensive and systematic manner. Teachers, as the leaders in online teaching, are responsible for implementing and organizing online classroom activities. Through supervision, the college leadership and relevant management departments will better grasp the basic dynamics of teachers in the online teaching process. After that feedbacks and suggestions are proposed to help teachers improve their online teaching skills effectively. Another important role of supervision is to prevent unexpected incidents in online teaching and promptly resolve potential risks.

The goal of teaching, learning, and management is to cultivate qualified talents, and academic supervision is directly related to the learning effectiveness of the students. In advocating for a student-centered teaching model reform, supervision is the most direct and effective method to assist students in their development in an all-round way. As students are in the critical period of personality growth, their ability of self-management and autonomous learning need to be improved. They are vulnerable to the interference of the Internet environment. We should acknowledge this objective fact and deal with the problems that our young students face nowadays.

Supervision is a guarantee for the effective implementation of online teaching and learning. At present, the truth is that the supervision system and mechanism of online teaching are far from being complete and sound. The effective management and evaluation mechanism of online teaching is still on the way in many higher vocational colleges. The supervision of online teaching fails to play its due role in improving the quality of online teaching. A supervision team should be established and it is urgent to strengthen the teaching supervision mechanism from the top-level structure and make online supervision truly the driving force and booster for improving the quality of online teaching.

Conclusion

This study focuses on the current situation of online teaching in Chinese higher vocational English course. Through in-depth research and analysis, the problems and challenges in online teaching are revealed, and improvement measures are proposed to help improve the quality of online teaching and promote the development of online teaching of vocational English course. All in all, improving the technical ability of teachers, enhancing students' participation, adjusting teaching resources and teaching modes and strengthening online teaching supervision are effective ways to improve the quality of online teaching in vocational English course. By strengthening the technical training and ability enhancement of teachers, we can improve their professional competence and teaching effectiveness in online teaching; by taking effective measures to increase students' engagement, we will stimulate their interest and initiative in learning and thus enhance their learning enthusiasm and participation. Supervision will also help improve the quality of online teaching in vocational English course and achieve better teaching outcomes.

Future researches are expected to explore the strategies for improving the quality of online teaching in vocational English course, and combine them with actual teaching situations to explore more suitable online teaching models and methods for vocational education. In addition, further research on how to use new technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data and virtual reality to improve the quality of online teaching is also a domain that needs to be further explored.

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