

On the Application of Web-quest Mode in English Graduation Thesis Teaching

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ABSTRACT. *After entering the workplace, Chinese students still face the need of English learning. They often need to read a large number of electronic or written English texts in their work, and these reading materials are quite different from the textbooks they come into contact with when they study English on campus. Therefore, they must adopt different ways and use different reading strategies to read these materials, so as to understand the materials and solve problems focus on purpose. In the 21st century, with the continuous development of network technology, a large number of electronic texts from the Internet have begun to be used in classroom teaching by English teachers in various countries. This study uses the multimedia and network teaching conditions of an adult university in Shanghai to carry out teaching experiments, trying to find out the use of reading strategies of Chinese Adult English learners in the network inquiry reading environment, and tries to provide useful enlightenment for improving their English reading ability.*

KEYWORDS: *Application, Web-quest Mode, Graduation Thesis Teaching*

1. Research background

After entering the 21st century, with the continuous development of network technology and the gradual popularization of Internet applications, a large number of electronic texts from the Internet have been used by English teachers for classroom teaching. In the United States, national educational technology standards have required teacher training programs to include the integration of the Internet into teaching practice. Therefore, with the general improvement of teachers' ability to use network technology, more and more network texts are used in classroom teaching to provide students with the latest information materials related to textbook learning. WebQuest proposed by Dodge (1998)[1] is a network inquiry method widely used in classroom teaching. In the teaching of reading, the use of network text and various network inquiry methods means that the format of reading text, the purpose of reading, the way of information exchange in the process of reading, and the role of readers in the process of reading are different from the traditional printed text.

2. Literature review

2.1 *Network text is different from traditional printed text*

Reinking, labbo, & McKenna (1997) [2] summarized the characteristics of network text. First of all, Web text is usually hypertext with many links, and their structure is nonlinear. When reading this kind of text, it is the reader, not the author, who controls the reading direction. The reader can change the reading line of the article at any time with the help of a certain link, such as using the Internet Dictionary to query words or using the built-in link to query the relevant background information. The advantage of reading network hypertext is that readers can choose the content and way of reading according to their own needs and preferences, but network reading also makes readers face the risk of losing control of the content of reading. Therefore, in the process of reading, readers need to use some reading strategies different from the traditional ones, and judge which hyperlinks can promote understanding through logical reasoning and context information (Coiro, 2003) [3], so as to avoid the interference of network environment in the process of reading comprehension. Secondly, traditional text usually only includes printed text and two-dimensional graphics, while network electronic text can contain a series of multimedia documents, such as icons, animations, pictures, cartoons, advertisements, sound and video clips, and virtual reality environment (Brunner & tally, 1999 [4]; reinking & Chanlin, 1994). The combination of image and sound with written text provides a new way for the transmission of meaning, the steps of interpretation and the communication between the author and the reader (Downes & fatouros, 1995) [5]. For readers, reading such multimedia materials needs to reconsider how to obtain, process and respond to information. Therefore, they need new reading strategies to help them remember details, interpret information, and integrate various forms of information. Finally, the network text is interactive. In traditional printed texts, the author sets the plot of the story and the structure of the article, and the reader can only follow the author's intention. On the other hand, web-based multimedia hyperlinks enable readers to co create articles with authors (Goldstone, 2001) [6]. Each reader will establish the understanding and mastery of information according to their own characteristics and needs when browsing along different link paths. At the same time, the network environment provides readers with more opportunities to communicate with others, such as expressing their opinions through forums, and communicating with others through instant messaging tools. Therefore, in the interactive network environment, readers are no longer just inferring the author's intention and the theme of the article to obtain knowledge, but to consider how to search for information, how to communicate with others and the environment, and how to make their own contribution to the knowledge in a certain field.

2.2 Reading online texts is different from reading traditional texts

Compared with the traditional text, network text makes readers have a new purpose and process of reading, but also produces different reading results. First of all, the network inquiry activities can make the readers' reading purposes closely combined with the tasks assigned by teachers. For example, the WebQuest proposed by Dodge (1998) is a kind of network inquiry method. Teachers can use this method to combine learning purpose with students' own reading purpose. A well-designed WebQuest project should include a clear purpose and a link to recommend students to use. This purpose should be a problem that can be solved by reading (spires & Estes, 2002). In this sense, WebQuest makes readers' reading purpose extend from obtaining understanding information to solving problems. Therefore, readers need to mobilize a higher level of thinking process, and even need to cooperate with others to complete the task. Secondly, in terms of reading activities, the traditional text reading process mainly includes decoding and higher-level language, semantic processing and monitoring processes, such as browsing to understand the main points of the article, and studying to promote the memory of information (rand reading study group, 2002). However, Brunner & tally (1999) pointed out that in order to cultivate students into thinkers who are good at communicating and solving difficult problems, it is necessary to help them change their reading habits of passive absorption of information and establish more active reading habits, such as organizing arguments, examining evidence and making creative judgments. The reading task of many network explorations is to require readers to treat reading materials with a more critical attitude, and to risk being cheated, convinced or instilled with biased ideas unconsciously. Therefore, in addition to task and resource tips, some course websites also contain some reading strategies to guide readers to identify the effectiveness of online information and identify commercial propaganda and biased views (<http://www.classroomtools.com>). In addition, students also need to master many other skills to complete the task of network exploration. These skills include: using search engines and electronic databases to search for information needed, locking in useful information for themselves, and identifying the connections between different information. Finally, in terms of reading results, web-based inquiry reading can provide readers with more opportunities to contact with various kinds of knowledge, apply what they have learned, and enable them to focus more on the construction of new knowledge. There are many websites that provide a large number of first-hand materials, as well as multimedia information such as videos, pictures and sound clips to show readers more extensive knowledge than textbooks, such as the learning section of the library of Congress (<http://rs6.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/index.html>). There are also more learning websites that encourage students to carry out research, design online learning materials, and even build their own knowledge base. At the same time, they provide platforms for publishing research results (such as: <http://www.thinkquest.Org> Etc.). The students' works published on these websites all show the results of network inquiry reading from one side.

2.3 There are different characteristics between network inquiry reading and traditional reading

First of all, network inquiry reading can promote the improvement of reading ability, but also make the readers who are good at traditional reading at a loss. Some studies have shown that the CAI environment can help students with reading difficulties improve their reading ability (McKenna, reinking, labbo, & Kieffer, 1999). However, the same research shows that web-based inquiry reading also brings new cognitive barriers to readers. Network hypertext gives readers too many choices, and multimedia forms such as animation can also distract readers' attention. Therefore, some readers who are good at traditional reading will lose their direction in the face of too much information burden, and then have a sense of frustration (Delaney & landow, 1991 [7]; Eagleton & Guinee, 2002 [8]). Therefore, teachers must be prepared to help students meet these challenges in teaching and avoid the interference of network information. Secondly, the carefully designed network inquiry reading makes students' reading purpose more extensive and reading motivation stronger. Robb (2000) [9] pointed out that as most students grow older, their interest in reading for entertainment is decreasing, and their motivation for learning is also decreasing. Therefore, some researchers suggest that network technology can be used to help students carry out challenging learning. At present, some studies have proved that web-based inquiry reading activities can enhance students' interest in reading, help them build up self-confidence, and encourage them to focus on reading activities and actively apply relevant reading strategies to promote understanding (Solomon, 2002) [10]. Finally, in most of the network inquiry reading activities, readers are no longer alone to complete the reading task alone. On the one hand, many tasks require them to cooperate with their peers; on the other hand, the network provides them with opportunities to communicate and cooperate with more people (Leu, 1996 [11]; Leu & Kinzer [12], 2000; reinking et al., 1998). In the network inquiry reading, the ability of readers to cooperate and communicate with others is very important. However, Leu and Kinzer (2000) pointed out that many students rely too much on independent learning strategies and have a distrust attitude towards online cooperative learning. Therefore, teachers need to try different teaching methods to help students develop cooperative learning strategies.

3. The design strategy of each module of network exploration

The implementation process of the first mock exam is generally divided into six modules: situation module, task module, process module, resource module, evaluation module and summary module (Dodge, 1997) [13], each module contains several main contents. This paper will discuss the design strategies of each module and the factors that need to be considered in the design process.

3.1 Context module

The content of the situation module includes the theme of the inquiry activity, the description of the situation simulating the real world, refining the problems to be solved through inquiry, and the overview of the final results. The main purpose of the module is to make students clear the learning content and enhance their interest in learning.

The main content of English learning is not isolated vocabulary and grammar knowledge, but the comprehensive use of these language elements. The writing of graduation thesis for English majors is to enable students to comprehensively use language skills and knowledge, read real English literature and express their views in English. Therefore, teachers should focus on expanding students' reading, and shift the teaching content from traditional teaching materials to network inquiry activities related to students' learning in University. For example, it is possible for students to explore the theme of the English language, such as writing an overview of the English language, writing a thesis on the basis of the theme of the English and American literature the author's life information, works, and related comments and other academic materials.

3.2 Task module

The purpose of the first mock exam is to let students clearly understand the learning objectives and curriculum requirements, so this module is the most important part of the web-based inquiry teaching mode. The module includes the basic questions to be answered and a series of related questions. First of all, inquiry task must be feasible and be able to attract students and arouse their critical and analytical thinking. Dodge (2002) [14] summarized the following 12 types of tasks: Retelling task, editing task, exploring task, news reporting task, design task, creative task, objection negotiation task, persuasive task, self understanding task, analytical task, judgment task and scientific exploration task.

Teachers should use these task types flexibly according to the requirements of each stage of graduation thesis writing. In the stage of thesis topic selection, retelling and exploring tasks can be designed to guide students to conduct in-depth exploration on Relevant Issues on the basis of extensive search and reading of relevant literature and materials through the Internet, so as to have a more comprehensive understanding and recognition of the field to be written. At the same time, teachers can listen to the students' summary and retelling of the reading materials to understand the students' positions and views on the relevant issues, and timely discover the logical fallacies of students' thinking mode, and give reminders. In the literature reading stage, we can design and arrange reporting, design and consultation tasks, organize students to carefully read the references selected in the previous stage, and organize group or class discussion activities through network forum, and ask students to post or post comments, so that students can gradually clarify their research purpose and writing content, so as to design their own paper structure frame. At the stage of writing papers, students work independently,

but teachers can not do nothing. At this stage, teachers can design self-understanding tasks, use network questionnaires and other methods to remotely monitor the progress of students' papers. On the other hand, they can use analytical tasks to guide students to carry out surveys and experiments, and independently analyze experimental data to draw reasonable conclusions to train the ability of analysis and summary. After the paper is finished, teachers can organize students to exchange articles through online forums, design editorial tasks, guide and train students to make self-improvement and mutual modification of papers, so as to further improve the papers.

In addition, the other purpose of applying network inquiry to English major graduation teaching is to improve students' English application ability, which is mainly reflected in the use of English to complete communication tasks. Therefore, the network inquiry link in the graduation thesis teaching of foreign language majors can make students contact with the real language environment to the maximum extent. The designed tasks should reflect the communication needs of the real world as much as possible, and train the students' ability to analyze and judge the information while accepting the information, to recreate and complete the communication task by using materials. For example, before the thesis defense, the design task guides the students to watch the paper defense video through the network, find the materials, and learn the defense skills, so as to know well before the defense, and to be calm and orderly in the defense.

3.3 Process module

The function of the process module is to guide the inquiry activities. This part needs to list and explain the steps to complete the task for students, and clearly define the role of students in each stage. At present, after three years of college study, Chinese students have strong computer operation ability, but most students are good at online chat, making friends and online games and other entertainment functions. They are not good at using the Internet to find learning materials, and they do not have the habit of promoting learning with the help of the rich resources of the network. Therefore, the primary purpose of the network inquiry process module in graduation thesis teaching is to teach students how to use network resources, search for useful information and literature, and find the inspiration of their graduation thesis. The basic design principle of process module can refer to "process writing Checklist" by Dodge (1999).

In addition, considering that the focus of English Majors' graduation thesis writing is to analyze and summarize relevant viewpoints and arguments through extensive reading of literature, and then design their own experiments or surveys, and finally draw logical conclusions and form their own views. Therefore, the design of process module in network exploration should not be too complicated, but should be as clear as possible to guide students into practice Qualitative reading and analysis activities can complete all the established tasks without wasting energy on the research operation steps; when students see the vast resources on the network and get the inspiration of writing, they can truly realize the fun of inquiry and the

benefits of inquiry on paper writing and English learning, so as to improve the enthusiasm of inquiry.

3.4 Resource module

The resource module of web-based inquiry course is a list of websites selected by teachers and pointing to specific resources on the Internet. The corresponding webpage contains the information and guide needed to answer questions or complete inquiry tasks. The goal of English major thesis writing is very clear. The resource module of network exploration can include the following types of network resources:

First, comprehensive search engine. In order to enable students to search for the topic of thesis writing on the basis of extensive reading, it is suggested that they use comprehensive search engines such as www.google.com and www.wikipedia.org. To confirm the meaning of professional terms in various contexts, clarify the differences between various concepts, and remove the conceptual obstacles for the topic selection.

Second, academic search engine. When students are interested in a certain topic and have a macro understanding of the basic concepts, teachers can guide students to use academic search engines, such as Google academic search (<http://scholar.google.com.hk>). Search for academic literature, lock in the literature related to your topic, read it further, and think about the entry point of your thesis.

Third, Chinese and English academic resources database. Domestic HowNet, Wanfang, foreign request, EBSCO and other databases are authoritative academic literature databases. Instructing students to make effective use of these databases can ensure the authority of reference sources and ensure the scientificity of students' papers and research methods.

Fourth, international open curriculum resources. At present, the world-famous MOOC (massive open online course) and other platforms have integrated the courses of many famous universities in the world. Guiding students to watch these courses can make up for the lack of students' original knowledge structure and expand their vision of the original topic of their papers.

3.5 Evaluation module

Most online inquiry courses use assessment scales to investigate different aspects of inquiry results. The WebQuest assessment scale designed by Dodge (2002) provides a lot of macro principles and standards for evaluating students' inquiry process and achievements. However, due to the differences in the theme, process and outcome form of each inquiry task, the content of the scale used to evaluate the results of different tasks is not the same. Therefore, the design of the evaluation module should be determined according to the content and characteristics of the specific inquiry task.

In terms of web-based inquiry in English Majors' graduation thesis, the design of assessment module should consider the following factors: first, because one of the main purposes of English major thesis writing is to train students' ability to search and analyze data and solve practical problems with the knowledge learned, the scale should focus on the assessment of students' mastery of practical skills, including the association of search literature Degree, depth of literature analysis, standardization and regulation of the paper. Second, as the network provides a large number of ready-made materials for students, it also encourages students' inertia, and even some students choose to plagiarize in order to cope with the task assigned by the teacher. Therefore, the evaluation content should distinguish whether the students use their own expression in the task results or refer to the original materials found on the Internet, so as to urge and encourage students to actively apply the knowledge they have learned Analysis and creation. Third, the evaluation module should not only include the quality evaluation of students' inquiry results, but also the evaluation of students' inquiry process, so as to understand and distinguish the students' ability of inquiry and the mastery of inquiry skills, so as to guide students' inquiry activities with a definite aim.

3.6 Summary module

Some people think that summary module is not necessary in WebQuest (Starr, 2002) [15]. But in practice, the author found that the summary process can organize students to review and reflect on the learning content, and expand the learning results. Most of the students pay attention to the topic content in the inquiry activities, and the summary process turns their attention to the reflection on learning methods and paper skills, which not only consolidates the knowledge learned by inquiry, but also enables them to realize the role of inquiry activities in curriculum learning. Secondly, the summary module can be a platform for students to select and display their works, so that students can communicate with each other and learn from each other to enhance their cooperative learning ability. Finally, the summary module is still a reflective module. Students can improve their ability of thinking and judgment through reflection and evaluation of inquiry process and works, so as to enhance their enthusiasm for autonomous learning.

4. Summary and discussion

The first mock exam method is still in the exploratory stage, but this model has a prominent advantage in the teaching of graduation thesis, that is, the students in the graduating class should be closely related to the tutors. Although many students need to practice and seldom go to school, the network inquiry task will not make them slack. And relax, also make their thesis process under the guidance of teachers.

In addition, its application should be combined with the traditional or other new teaching mode to produce the best effect. At present, the post-90s college students are very close to the Internet, but the phenomenon of students lost due to the flooding of resources may also appear in the network exploration, which requires the

use of traditional teaching methods to guide students out of the fog. Network inquiry will also make students indulge in the network, only know search but not digestion and consolidation, which also requires timely guidance of teachers, let them understand that the network is only a tool, network inquiry can not deviate from the original intention of learning knowledge and training skills.

In a word, the use of network inquiry mode in English major graduation thesis teaching has its own unique design principles and strategies. Teachers should grasp these principles and strategies, properly and reasonably use the network inquiry method to explore a new way of English major graduation thesis reform.

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Brief introduction to the author

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