A Brief Discussion on the Approaches to Helping Senior High Students Develop Learning Strategies

Dan Liu

School of Foreign Languages, China West Normal University, Nanchong 637000, China

1187843207@qq.com

Abstract

Under the background of the new curriculum reform, higher requirements are put forward for the abilities of students. Learning ability is one of the abilities that students must possess.In order to improve students' learning ability, the cultivation of learning strategies can not be ignored. Learning strategies are the essential condition for the development of key competence of English subject. And they are also the most important component of comprehensive language ability. The cultivation of learning strategies not only helps students learn efficiently to achieve learning goals better, but also lays a solid foundation for students' lifelong learning. Therefore, it is of great importance to help students develop learning strategies. This paper explains in detail how English teachers help senior high students develop learning strategies suitable for themselves.

Keywords

Senior High Students; Learning Strategies; Cultivation.

1. Introduction

In the traditional English teaching pattern, a great number of teachers pay excessive attention to language knowledge input, but ignore the cultivation of students' learning strategies. As a result, senior high school students spend a lot of time and energy on study, but the learning effect is not ideal. More importantly, they do not develop good learning habits. The English Curriculum Standard for Senior High School (2018) clearly points out that the design and implementation of high school curriculum helps students optimize their English learning methods and enable them to learn actively. So that students can possess reasonable and effective learning strategies, and improve their autonomous learning ability. Thus, students' comprehensive development can be achieved.

2. Learning Strategies

2.1. Definition of Learning Strategies

What are learning strategies? It holds different meanings for different people. Oxford(1990) believes that learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, and more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations. Cohen(1998) holds second language learner strategies encompass both second language learning and second language use strategies. Taken together they constitute the steps or actions consciously selected by learners either to improve the learning of a second language, the use of it, or both. Rubin(1987) thinks that learning strategies are strategies which contribute to the development of language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly.

2.2. Classification of Learning Strategies

With regard to the classification of learning strategies, Chamot and O'Malley (1990) divided learning strategies into three main categories: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and socioaffective strategies. Metacognitive strategies involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed such as functional planning, self-management, self-evaluation and so on. Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself, such as repetition, resourcing, note taking and so on. Socioaffective strategies have to do with social-mediating activity and transacting with others, such as cooperation, self-motivation, question for clarification and so on.

3. Approaches to Helping Senior High Students Develop Learning Strategies

3.1. Ways to Cultivate Metacognitive Strategies

3.1.1. Develop the Habit of Making and Adjusting Learning Plans

Teachers should tell students the benefits of making learning plans and instruct students how to make a plan that suits themselves. At the beginning of each semester, the teacher first tells students the goals and specific requirements of English learning, so that students can arrange specific learning time according to their actual situation, work out reasonable learning plans, and put them into action. As we all know, different students have different learning demands, information acquisition and learning comprehension ability. Therefore, in the learning process, it is very important to guide the students to adjust the learning plan according to their own actual learning situations.

3.1.2. Place a High Value on Formative Assessment and Guide Students to Monitor Learning Process

Formative assessment refers to the evaluation of students' performance, achievements, emotions and attitudes reflected in the daily learning process. It is a developmental evaluation based on continuous observation and recording of the entire learning process of students. In the teaching process, teachers should give feedback in time and help different students develop their own learning strategies by observing students' classroom performance, learning characteristics and dialogue with students after class, aiming at maximizing the learning effect. When students make great progress by using learn strategies efficiently and monitoring their own learning process, they can gain a sense of accomplishment and enhance their self-confidence.

3.1.3. Put Great Emphasis on Learning-centeredness, and Encourage Students to Actively Participate in Assessment

Students are the main participants in the assessment process. Under the guidance of teachers, students use appropriate assessment methods and feasible assessment tools to actively evaluate their academic performance, discover and analyze specific problems that appear in the learning process. Self-assessment and peer assessment should be encouraged to strengthen the interaction and communication between students, so as to promote self-supervised learning. And in the process of mutual assessment, students can constantly reflect on themselves, learn from each other, and regulate their learning strategies.

3.2. Ways to Cultivate Cognitive Strategies

3.2.1. Foster Students' Good Learning Habits

Before class, students should be told that they need to preview what they will learn, listen carefully to the lecture, and think positively about the questions raised by the teacher. After class, students need to review and summarize what they have learned. At the same time, teachers encourage students to develop the habit of taking notes, writing down the key and difficult points encountered in the learning process. In this way, students not only sort out the knowledge that they have learned, but also have opportunities to review and consolidate their previous knowledge. It should be noted that teachers need to conduct random checks from time to time at the beginning to urge students to develop the habit of autonomous learning.

3.2.2. Help Students Master Efficient Learning Methods

The first one is attention strategy. Teachers must inform students of the purpose of English learning, and explain the significance of the learning content of each unit, so as to attract students' intentional attention and boost the efficiency of English learning. Especially in class, it is necessary to ask questions to arouse students' curiosity and exercise their thinking ability or design topics that students are interested in, or create real situations to stimulate students' motivation and let them focus on learning.

The second one is guessing strategy. Teachers guide students to infer the meaning of words and sentences based on the context or logical development; use syntactic structure, common sense or background knowledge to guess the meaning; infer the meaning by analyzing the structure of the word such as prefix, suffix, and root, and then put it in the original text to understand whether it is in accord with the overall content of the passage.

The third one is resource strategy. In English teaching, teachers should guide students not only to effectively use textbooks, but also to actively use other learning resources, such as English songs, English newspapers, literary works, network resources, reference books, etc. More importantly, students need to be guided to learn how to use these resources to maximize their learning effect and broaden their own learning channels. For example, dictionary is a great tool for students to learn vocabulary. Teachers can help students learn how to use a dictionary to look up a new word so that students can turn to dictionary when they do not know some words.

3.3. Ways to Cultivate Socioaffective Strategies

3.3.1. Cultivate Students' Cooperation Strategy

The ultimate goal of English teaching is to enable students to use English in work or life when necessary. Therefore, teachers should encourage students to apply the knowledge they have learned in the classroom to their daily lives to improve their cooperation and communication skills. In English teaching, the interaction between students should be emphasized. Therefore, it is essential to let students conduct group cooperation. The teacher can divide the whole class into several groups. Each group contains 4 to 6 members and has a corresponding task. And then in order to accomplish the task, group members need to collaborate with each other, which makes a great contribution to enhancing autonomous learning and cooperative learning capability.

3.3.2. Pay Attention to Students' Emotion and Create a Pleasant Learning Atmosphere

Teachers need to attach great importance to the students' emotion and create a comfortable, harmonious and friendly learning atmosphere. If students are relaxed and motivated, then they will be immersed in English learning and actively participate in the classroom activities to achieve efficient learning. Conversely, if they often feel irritable and anxious, then they will have resistance to learning English, thereby inhibiting their desire to learn, and their English learning performance will not be satisfactory. Therefore, in the process of English teaching,

teachers should pay close attention to students' emotion and strive to create a pleasant learning atmosphere in the classroom.

3.3.3. Stimulate Students' Learning Motivation and Interest

Teachers should inform students of the importance of English learning, and cultivate students' intrinsic motivation to learn English. In addition, teachers need to be good at using textbooks and other teaching resources to stimulate students' interest in learning English. It is significant to design various forms of classroom activities, so that students maintain a positive attitude towards English learning and take the initiative to participate in classroom. Besides, teachers encourage students not to be afraid of making mistakes when using English and teachers also need to guide students to continuously reflect on the problems and take active measures to solve them.

4. The Significance and Role of Cultivating Senior High Students' Learning Strategies

4.1. Cultivate Students' Autonomous Learning Ability

At present, a great number of senior high school students generally rely on teachers when learning English, so most students do not have the awareness of autonomous learning, and the awareness of using English learning strategies is even weaker. Therefore, teachers should guide students to find learning strategies suitable for their learning characteristics and learn how to apply learning strategies. It should be noted that the selection of learning strategies will depend upon the task. Sometimes one strategy action might be enough to handle the task, but for more complex tasks the use of a clusters of strategies would be more likely. Only when students know how to use learning strategies correctly, can they gradually develop the ability to acquire and apply new knowledge independently during their learning process which is conducive to improving students' autonomous learning ability, cultivating students' autonomous learning awareness and developing good learning habits.

4.2. Improve Students' Learning Efficiency

Learning strategies play a vital role in English learning. The use of learning strategies is a good way to enhance performance in language learning and use, both in general and on specific tasks. Efficient learning strategies are more helpful for those students with relatively poor learning ability, because they can get more obvious improvement and increase confidence in learning English. In the process of English teaching, teachers not only impart students' relevant English knowledge, but also help them master the ways of English learning and cultivate efficient learning strategies, thus the goal of the cultivation of students' autonomous learning ability could be achieved.

5. Conclusion

In summary, guiding students to use the above English learning strategies is a significant way to cultivate students' English learning ability which is an important part of key competence of English subject. During course of teaching English, teachers have responsibility to help students develop reasonable and effective English learning strategies suitable for themselves and learn how to use learning strategies correctly, which is conducive to promoting the development of students' autonomous learning ability and laying a sound foundation for students' lifelong learning.

Acknowledgments

References

[1] H.D. Brown: Principles of Language Learning and Teaching. (Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, China 2002).

[2] A.D. Cohen: Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language. (Longman, Britain 1998).

[3] Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. General Senior High School English Curriculum Standard. (People's Education Press,China 2018).

[4] O'Malley, J. M &A. U. Chamot. Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition. (Cambridge University Press, Britain 1990).

[5] R.L. Oxford: Language Learning Strategies. (Newbury House, Britain 1990).

[6] Rubin J & A Wenden: Learner Strategies in Language Learning. (Prentice Hall International Ltd, Britain 1987).