

The Application of Multiple Intelligences Theory in Middle High School English Teaching

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Abstract

According to the requirements of the English curriculum standards, middle high school English teaching must be learner-centered and respect the individual differences. Multiple intelligences theory advocates that different individuals have different intelligence structures. This theory also provides new ideas for teaching activities and teaching assessment and implies that our teaching should proceed in differentiated instruction and develop as much as possible students' different potentials in their intelligences, giving everyone the chance to demonstrate and use their potentials to the fullest possible. In other words, every single student should be given the chance to be the best they can be in their abilities. In addition, multiple-assessment should be advocated. Varying assessment methods helps to make assessment fairer and more reliable. So that students can achieve diversified and personalized development and promote their comprehensive development.

Keywords: Middle high school English teaching; multiple intelligences theory; comprehensive development.

1. Introduction

With the implementation of the new curriculum standards, quality-oriented education has been the core concept of education. The main task of English teaching is to enhance middle high students' comprehensive development. However, in the traditional teaching mode, most teachers still regard the improvement of students' academic performance as the main goal ignoring the development of students' other intelligences. As a result, the overall development of students cannot be enhanced. However, the proposal of multiple-intelligences theory draws teachers' attention on students' overall development. According to this theory, every individual has eight kinds of intelligences. In order to cultivate students' intelligences in a comprehensive way, teachers must note that the organizations and expressions of these eight kinds of intelligences are different. (Wang Qiang. 2006). So when teachers design the teaching activities, they should fully think about the intellectual characteristics of each student and adopt various teaching methods and learning activities, which can arouse students' interest in English learning and cultivate students' comprehensive language ability.

2. Definition of multiple intelligences theory

American psychologist Gardner(1983) has proposed the theory of multiple-intelligence which has provided a new perception for understanding human beings. He put forward that people have seven kinds of intelligences, that is linguistic intelligence, musical intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence. Then in 1996, the naturalistic intelligence was proposed.

Linguistic Intelligence

It consists of the ability to use words effectively, both orally and in writing, understand people's thoughts and emotions through their language, and use different language expressions to better express one's thoughts and emotions. Sample skills are remembering information, convincing others to help, and talking about language itself.

Musical Intelligence

It is about the ability to perceive and compose music and the sensibility of rhythm, tone, and melody. Sample skills are recognizing simple songs and being able to vary speed, tempo, and rhythm in simple melodies.

Logical-mathematical intelligence

It involves the ability to use numbers effectively and solve problems logically. Sample skills are understanding the basic properties of numbers, the principles of cause and effect, and the ability to predict.

Spatial Intelligence

It is concerned with the ability to feel shapes, discriminate space, remember colors and change the spatial relationships between objects. Sample skills include the ability to represent visual or spatial ideas graphically.

Bodily-kinesthetic Intelligence

It refers to the ability to express ideas and feelings by using one's body. Sample skills are coordination, flexibility, and balance.

Interpersonal Intelligence

It includes the ability to understand another person's mood, feelings, motivations, and intentions. Sample skills are getting along with other people, responding effectively to other people, problem solving, and resolving conflict.

Intrapersonal Intelligence

It consists of the ability to understand yourself, your merits, shortcomings, moods, desires, and intentions correctly. Sample skills are understanding how one is similar to or different from others, knowing about oneself as a language learner, and knowing how to handle one's feelings.

Naturalist Intelligence

It refers to the ability to appreciate the naturalist world, distinguish different species in nature world, and enjoy outdoor activities.

3. The Application of multiple intelligences theory in English teaching**3.1 The application of linguistic intelligence**

The linguistic intelligence of students plays a crucial role in English learning. The improvement of students' language ability is naturally inseparable from the development of students' linguistic intelligence. Teachers must take the development of linguistic intelligence as a foundation in English teaching, continuously enhance students' language expression and understanding ability, and enable students to obtain good development in language understanding and use (Campbel,C. 1993). According to the requirements for the development of linguistic intelligence, teachers can take various forms of teaching activities to provide students with multiple opportunities for meaningful language practice, so that students can promote the development of their language ability.

3.2 The application of musical intelligence

Middle high school students are more sensitive to hearing and particularly good at imitating. At the same time, they also show a very strong interest in music. Therefore, teachers can combine rich music materials with English teaching according to the characteristics of students, and use students' interest in music to adjust teaching activities. Besides, teachers are expected to use music appropriately and reasonably in English teaching, so that students can have a deeper grasp of language rhythm, melody, and pronunciation, and enhance their sense of language.

3.3 The application of Logical-mathematical intelligence

Students with strong intelligence in mathematical logic will have stronger reasoning and calculation skills, and they tend to think, analyze and solve problems through reasoning (Gardner, M. A. 1994). Teachers can make full use of this intelligence. For example, in English reading teaching, after students have finished reading the text, the teacher can disrupt the sequence of the plot development of the text, and then let students reorder the plot content according to the development of the text. Besides, students can be encouraged to guess the meaning of new words through the logical relationship of the context and the rules of word formation during the reading process, which not only allows students to better understand the content of the text, but also gradually improves their logical thinking ability.

3.4 The application of spatial intelligence

In English learning, the development of spatial intelligence helps students learn and understand language visually and intuitively, enhance students' language cognitive ability, and strengthen students' mastery of language knowledge and skills. In order to ensure the development of spatial intelligence, teachers should be good at using effective teaching resources in teaching process to design reasonable teaching activities and activate the classroom atmosphere. For example, teachers can use different methods such as playing videos, displaying pictures, designing posters to show the teaching content and improve the efficiency of students' English learning.

3.5 The application of bodily intelligence

Bodily intelligence is an important part of multiple intelligence theory. Teachers are supposed to design hand-operated activities and encourage students to use the whole body to express their thoughts and emotions, so that students not only can be good at learning through touch and body movement, but also successfully grasp English knowledge points by interacting with teachers and classmates. The teaching activities that teachers can use involve: dance, gestures, role-playing, cooperation and competition, drama and various sports activities.

3.6 The application of interpersonal intelligence

The ultimate goal of learning English is to be able to use English appropriately in life and work when necessary. And in this process, interpersonal intelligence is essential. In order to make students' interpersonal intelligence better developed, teachers should design some real English communicative activities, conduct group work, and encourage students to actively use English to express themselves. For example, the whole class can be divided into several groups in advance. Each group contains four to six members and has a corresponding task. And then group members need to discuss how to accomplish the task and collaborate with each other, which makes a great contribution to enhancing interpersonal skills and cooperative learning capability.

3.7 The application of introspective intelligence

In process of English teaching, teachers can take full advantage of students' introspective intelligence and adopt self-evaluation method to guide students to self-reflection on their academic performance, discover and analyze specific problems (Hoerr, T. R. 2000). In addition, teachers are expected to give full play to their own counseling role to provide correct teaching guidance for students, which can help students make correct assessments according to their own learning status. Then they are able to make appropriate adjustments to their learning, so as to develop their introspective intelligence and improve their ability to find and solve problems.

3.8 The application of naturalist intelligence

Students with naturalist intelligence can perceive and observe the world around them keenly, and have a great interest in exploring the natural environment. Teachers can apply this kind of intelligence in their

teaching and there are some common teaching activities that teachers can use, such as outdoor reading, development of environmental programs, formulating animal and plant protection plans, writing observation notes and so on. These activities can foster students' naturalist Intelligence.

4. The Application of Multiple Intelligence in English Teaching Assessment

In the traditional English teaching evaluation, examinations are the mostly used method to evaluate students' academic performance. This evaluation method often takes 'pencil and paper' form and only pays attention to students' scores ignoring whether their ability has been improved. However, the application of multiple intelligences theory in teaching assessment allows teachers to focus attention on multiple-assessment which refers that the content of evaluation should be comprehensive and evaluation methods should also be diversified. For example, the combination of self-assessment and peer-assessment can be encouraged, so students not only can diagnose some of their own learning strengths and weaknesses and self-direct the process of language development, but also learn from each other. Besides, evaluation should focus on differentiated evaluation of individual students, that means, for each student with unique intellectual characteristics, teachers need to put forward personalized evaluation suggestions conducive to their unique development (Lazear, D. 2000).

5. The significance of applying multiple intelligences to teaching

5.1 Better understand students

At present, in a fair number of secondary school, the class are usually big-sized. As we all know, students are different. But most teachers use the same teaching method ignoring students' individual differences. However, the application of multiple intelligences theory can help teachers understand students more comprehensively. According to multiple intelligences theory, each student has his or her own understanding intelligences, unique personality traits, and learning styles. So a one-size-fits-all approach can never satisfy the needs of students. Teachers are supposed to choose the teaching method according to their differences to promote the development of students' potential, and ultimately promote the better development of each student (Lazear, D. 1991).

5.2 Optimize teaching methods and improve teaching quality

Integrating the theory of multiple intelligences into English teaching activities can effectively change traditional teaching concepts and help teachers to understand students from different perspectives. When teachers design English learning activities, they have to be aware of their students' intelligences and try to creates various directed intelligence training activities which students are interested in. So that students can be encouraged to use various learning methods to accomplish certain tasks, acquire some language knowledge and develop their different kinds of intelligences. (Thomas Armstrong. 1994). In this way, teaching and learning methods are enriched and finally the quality of English teaching can be improved.

5.3 Promote students' overall development

According to multiple intelligences theory, it can be found that in order to promote all-round development of students, the cultivation and differences of students' multiple intelligences cannot be ignored, which is consistent with the content of national English curriculum standards. In the teaching process, teachers use various ways to attract students' attentions, such as telling stories, showing pictures, watching videos, body language, role-playing, answering questions and so on, which meet the demands of most students, provide multiple opportunities for them to utilize their strong intelligences to learn and improve their weak intelligences, which is conducive to training students to become comprehensive talents that meet the needs of society (Bruce, W. R. 2007).

6. Conclusion

The theory of multiple-intelligence has exerted a positive effect on English teaching. This theory emphasizes that each student has his or her own intelligence. In the process of teaching, teachers are expected to develop and foster students' potential intelligence in order to make a balanced development of each intelligence type. Applying multiple intelligences theory to teaching can help teachers have a deep understanding of teaching materials, design teaching activities scientifically and reasonably, and provide appropriate assessment, so that students' all kinds of intelligences can be developed. Finally, students' all-round development can be promoted and continuous optimization of teaching and learning can be achieved.

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