

The Effects on Teachers Professional Development by the Collaboration between Chinese and Foreign English Teachers

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Abstract

Teachers professional development is a long and tough work. It involves teachers' language ability, teaching theory, classroom management and culture knowledge. This paper takes collaboration between Chinese and foreign English teachers as an example, for finding out the ways to promote teachers professional development. The language ability and cultural awareness of Chinese English teachers were improved through the collaboration teaching process. The collaboration between Chinese and foreign English teachers has positive functions on Chinese English teachers professional development.

Key words: Collaboration, Teaching, Teachers Development, English teacher

Introduction

The elementary qualities of an English teacher are standard pronunciation, rich vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics and speaking, listening, reading, writing and translating. (Shu Dingfang 2005; Xia Jimei 2000) However, for our country, according to the research of Shu Dingfang (2005) the biggest problem in English teaching is the qualities of English teachers. By the statistics, most English teachers failed to meet the standard.

At present, there are two ways to cultivate teachers which are organized training and self-improving. However, both of them have some limitations. Most lessons of training are about teaching research, teaching approach, teaching theory and so on. Thus, the trainers cannot get the help of language practical abilities. In one 2004 study of data from investigation, Mei Deming found that the teaching approaches are old-fashioned and stereotyped and unchangeable which can not arouse students' learning interest in secondary and elementary schools. Chinese English teachers' own teaching qualities need to be improved immediately. Some put forward a solving method which is that teachers go abroad to do further study. But it is not practical. Thus, how to make full use of existing conditions to facilitate Chinese English teachers' language practical abilities is a valuable research.

The research does the survey in the collaboration English classes of Tianfu New Area Experimental Primary School. Chinese English teachers and foreign teachers teach together has many good effects. One is that the class is more effective, the other is teachers' professional development. This study mainly talks about teachers' professional development.

1. The collaboration between Chinese and foreign English teachers

There is one collaboration English class for every grade every week in Tianfu New Area Experimental Primary School. In this school, students begin English learning from grade one. All Chinese English teachers can have many chances to communicate with foreign English teachers. Take one collaboration class as an example. Firstly, Chinese English teachers need to discuss with foreign English teachers to decide their teaching contexts for one unit. And then Chinese English teachers prepare the key points and the foreign teachers do the power point according to their discussion. After the well-prepared for the collaboration class, both of them have the class together. Sometimes, the foreign teacher guides students to play games and Chinese English teacher gives help. Sometimes, the foreign teacher is the keynote speaker in collaborating class, the Chinese English teacher does the observation Or the Chinese English teacher teach the knowledge points and then the foreign teacher guide students to play games which can use the knowledge points in same class together. At last, after their collaborating classes, they will have further discussion about class problems, merits or demerits. These series of cooperating teaching work influence both of them. How collaboration between Chinese and foreign English teachers influence Chinese English teachers themselves and what are the effects on them?

2. Findings

By the observation and investigation during the collaboration teaching for around one year, it found that Chinese English teachers have obvious changes in many aspects.

2.1 Chinese English teachers' language practical abilities have been significantly improved.

This change is not only found by themselves but their colleagues and students. For example, an English teacher whose name is Lily. She come to Tianfu New Area Experimental Primary School after her graduation. At the beginning of her teaching career, she participated to new teachers training. And her language proficiency was tested by various scales. Therefore, she and her colleagues all knew her language proficiency, especially her practical language ability.

She has twelve classes every week. Among them, there are four collaboration classes every week. From the aspect of the collaborating process, she need to co-work with the foreign teacher at least eight times a week. If she wants to start a new unit, she will find out the key words and sentence structure. Meanwhile, the foreign teacher will pre-view textbook and discuss with Chinese English. Sometimes, the same unit will be taught in many different ways by different teachers or as for different students there are different teaching methods. Thus Lily need to discuss a lot with the foreign teachers in many aspects. When they talk to each other, no matter what the cultural awareness, teaching theories and language expressions, there will be much thinking interaction. In other words, the collaboration step one begins to have effects on Lily. From Lily's teaching dairies, we can find that she found her improved a lot in language expressions (oral English). She can speak more fluently in classes. Moreover the use of words and the sentence structure construction were changed a lot.

What abilities have been mentioned above, they can be concluded to teachers' language practical abilities. All in all, collaboration between Chinese English teachers and foreign English teachers has significant effects on Chinese English teachers' practical language abilities.

2.2 Chinese English teachers' language culture awareness has been significantly improved.

Culture awareness is closely related to teaching efficiency. Concerning Chinese students, their English input are mainly from books, media and Chinese English teachers. However, most Chinese English teachers are not very confident due to the lack of culture awareness.

In collaborating, Chinese English teachers can know the foreign culture directly. The teaching process involves the history, geography, society system, politics, thinking ways, education ideas and values of English-speaking countries. Combining all the culture knowledge with practical teaching, it is easier to be understood and accepted. Such as the class games choice, the foreign teacher refer to choosing more games to practice students to show leaner-centered. It is a teaching theory which would influence Chinese teachers awareness.

Except teaching collaboration, teaching and research section would organize some Chinese English teachers and foreign teachers activities for promoting their contact. They are not only co-workers, but also friends. Chinese teachers know foreign culture better after collaboration. During their co-teaching, the Chinese teachers have personal experience on foreign teachers' work and use of English in different situations. "It gives true feelings to help us speak more confidently and truly." said by Christina (one of Chinese English teachers).

Chinese English teachers' practical language abilities and culture awareness have been improved through collaboration teaching.

2.3 Chinese English teachers' classroom teaching ability has been significantly improved.

The basic language skills of English teachers directly influence classroom teaching abilities, especially on the new model teaching. Teachers cannot repeat what the books say anymore. And the classroom activities will not proceed as you wanted or planned. The new model classes are diversity and personalized which emphasize the interaction between teachers and students. For these reason, teachers cannot expect and completely well-prepared for a class. The English teacher need to switch roles in different teaching activities. Whether creating a lively and vivid classroom directly influences the teaching efficiency.

Luckily, the Chinese Ministry of Education advocate institutions of higher learning, middle school and even elementary school giving full play to foreign teachers role from 2011. And in 2015, Beijing has put forward some policies to fasten the development of using of foreign English teachers. Hence, under government supporting, the collaboration between Chinese English teachers and foreign English teachers can develop rapidly.

3. Discussion and analysis

At present, most schools will employ foreign English teachers. But there are seldom schools begin collaborating teaching. Most of them teach individually. They have few contacts with Chinese English teachers. The collaboration between Chinese English teachers and foreign English teachers is a new and significant choice. Thanks to this research findings are mainly basic on personal observation and interview; the accuracy may not satisfy everyone. However, this kind of co-teaching has many obviously good effects on Chinese English teachers' language practical abilities, culture awareness and classroom teaching ability with no doubt. Further more, the effects of collaboration teaching guide primary school and secondary school and higher education institutions how to play to the role of foreign English teachers more effectively.

The effects of collaboration between Chinese and Foreign English teachers are obvious. However, thanks to there are few foreign English teachers and they are different in culture, characteristic and society background. Contradictions and differences are inevitable in the collaboration teaching. If they mishandle it, it may bring about some negative effects. Thus they need to construct effective communication coordination mechanism to avoid that problem. In general, collaboration between Chinese and Foreign English teachers are meaningful and valuable for adapting and studying.

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