

A Brief Discussion on Strategies to Enhance the Effectiveness of English Teaching in Rural Junior High Schools

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Abstract: With the advancement of rural education revitalization, the effectiveness of English teaching in rural junior high schools has become a crucial issue, constrained by factors such as limited resources and students' learning conditions. This paper focuses on English teaching in rural junior high schools. It first outlines the teaching characteristics, then analyzes the current situation in depth, identifying problems such as weak teaching faculty, insufficient student foundation and motivation, scarce teaching resources, and outdated teaching concepts and methods. In response to these challenges, the paper proposes several strategies to improve teaching effectiveness, including constructing contextualized teaching models, implementing differentiated instruction, strengthening cooperative learning in groups, utilizing multimedia and online resources, and optimizing teaching evaluation. The aim is to enhance the quality of English teaching in rural junior high schools, emphasize the cultivation of students' core competencies, and provide feasible references for the development of rural English education.

Keywords: Rural junior high school; English teaching; effectiveness strategies

Introduction

With the continuous advancement of educational reform, the quality of English teaching in rural junior high schools has attracted increasing attention. Due to geographical and economic constraints, rural areas face numerous challenges in English instruction. As an essential communication tool and subject, English plays a vital role in students' future development. However, current English teaching in rural junior high schools

is hampered by problems such as insufficient teaching staff, weak student foundations, limited teaching resources, and outdated pedagogical methods. These factors lead to low teaching efficiency and restrict students' improvement in English proficiency. An in-depth analysis of these issues and the exploration of effective strategies to enhance teaching effectiveness are not only conducive to students' personal growth but also have profound significance for promoting educational equity and advancing rural education development.



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1. Overview of English Teaching in Rural Junior High Schools

(1) From the perspective of teaching objectives:

The primary goal of English teaching in rural junior high schools is to enable students to master basic English knowledge and skills—including vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing—so that they can use English for simple daily communication. This foundation not only supports their future studies and life but also lays the groundwork for lifelong learning. At the same time, rural English education emphasizes cultivating students' interest in learning, learning strategies, and cross-cultural communication awareness, thereby enhancing their overall language competence. It also seeks to guide students toward positive learning attitudes and correct values, helping them adapt to the needs of social development and international communication.

(2) From the perspective of teaching subjects:

Students in rural junior high schools constitute a distinctive group. Most come from rural families, and their initial foundations in English learning vary widely. Some lack access to good English learning environments or early exposure to the language. Although rural students are generally simple and sincere in character, they often suffer from low self-confidence and lack effective learning methods. Nevertheless, they also possess qualities such as diligence and perseverance, as well as a strong desire for new knowledge. With proper guidance and encouragement, they can demonstrate significant learning potential.

(3) From the perspective of the teaching environment:

English teaching in rural junior high schools faces multiple challenges. Teaching resources are relatively scarce, and educational facilities are often inadequate—for example, shortages of multimedia equipment, English learning software, and other technological tools limit the diversification of teaching approaches. Moreover, the local cultural atmosphere is relatively weak, and students have limited opportunities to encounter English in authentic contexts, making it difficult to create real language-use scenarios. However, in recent years, thanks to supportive educational policies and the progress of educational informatization, the

teaching environment in rural areas has been gradually improving, providing new opportunities for enhancing the quality of English instruction ^[1].

2. Analysis of the Current Situation of English Teaching in Rural Junior High Schools

2.1 Weak Teaching Faculty and Insufficient Professional Competence

There are significant shortcomings in the teaching workforce for English in rural junior high schools. Firstly, there is a sheer shortage of English teachers. Many teachers in these schools shoulder multiple roles and heavy teaching loads, making it difficult for them to dedicate sufficient time and energy to refining their teaching methods. Secondly, the professional competence of these teachers varies greatly. Some teachers do not have an educational background in English, leading to weaknesses in their foundational knowledge, non-standard pronunciation, and inaccuracies in areas like grammar instruction and vocabulary usage, which adversely affects the accuracy of students' knowledge acquisition. Furthermore, rural schools lack effective teacher training mechanisms. Opportunities for teachers to participate in external training and exchanges are scarce, leaving them with limited exposure to advanced teaching concepts and methods, and resulting in slow knowledge renewal. Compounding these issues is the serious outflow of qualified English teachers. Due to the relatively poorer teaching conditions and living environment in rural areas, many experienced teachers choose to transfer to urban schools. This exacerbates the instability of the English teaching workforce in rural junior high schools, hindering overall improvement in teaching quality.

2.2 Uneven Student Foundations and Low Learning Motivation

Students in rural junior high schools show significant differences in their English proficiency. Some students received little or low-quality English instruction in primary school, leading to serious deficiencies in basic knowledge such as vocabulary and grammar when they enter junior high school. This gap between students with weak and strong foundations poses great challenges to teaching. In terms of motivation, many students lack clear learning goals and intrinsic drive. Rural families often place limited emphasis on

English education, and parents with lower educational backgrounds are unable to provide effective guidance or supervision. Furthermore, the overall English learning atmosphere in schools is weak. Students have few opportunities to use English in real-life situations, which makes English learning seem dull and irrelevant, thereby reducing their enthusiasm and initiative^[2].

2.3 Scarcity of Teaching Resources and Limited Teaching Conditions

The shortage of teaching resources in rural junior high schools is severe. Although standardized textbooks are provided, supplementary materials such as workbooks and practice resources are limited in both variety and quantity, failing to meet students' diverse learning needs. In terms of facilities, many schools lack modern teaching equipment such as multimedia classrooms and language labs. Traditional teaching tools—"a blackboard and a piece of chalk"—remain the main instructional method, which restricts the variety of teaching approaches and diminishes student engagement.

Extracurricular learning resources are also insufficient. School libraries often have very few English-related books, magazines, or newspapers, limiting students' access to English materials. Additionally, the use of online learning resources is constrained by poor internet coverage and outdated school network equipment in some rural areas, preventing students from using online platforms for independent learning or knowledge expansion.

2.4 Outdated Teaching Concepts and Methods Leading to Low Classroom Efficiency

Traditional teaching concepts remain deeply ingrained in rural junior high school English education. Many teachers still adopt a teacher-centered approach that emphasizes knowledge transmission while neglecting students' active participation and subjectivity. In class, teachers talk most of the time, and students spend little time practicing; as a result, students passively receive knowledge without opportunities for critical thinking or expression. Teaching methods are also relatively monotonous, relying mainly on lecturing while lacking diversity in approaches such as situational teaching or task-based learning. This rigidity results in a dull classroom atmosphere and low student engagement. Furthermore, teachers often fail to address individual

differences among students and rarely design targeted teaching strategies based on their actual proficiency levels. Consequently, some students fall behind in learning progress, classroom efficiency remains low, and teaching objectives are difficult to achieve effectively.

3. Strategies for Enhancing the Effectiveness of English Teaching in Rural Junior High Schools

3.1 Constructing Contextualized Teaching Models to Stimulate Interest in Language Use

Due to objective limitations, students in rural junior high schools have few opportunities to practice English in real-life contexts, which dampens their motivation to learn. Building a contextualized teaching model can effectively stimulate students' interest in using the language. On one hand, teachers can create life-based scenarios by integrating elements of rural life into classroom activities. For example, when teaching vocabulary and expressions related to shopping, teachers may simulate a rural marketplace and have students role-play as customers and vendors, conducting exchanges in English such as product inquiries and price negotiations. Because these scenarios are familiar to students, they feel more willing to express themselves and better understand how English applies to real-life situations. On the other hand, virtual contexts can be created through multimedia resources. Teachers can use images, videos, and audio materials to present students with a vivid and engaging English-speaking world. For instance, showing English animation clips allows students to enjoy interesting stories while experiencing authentic pronunciation and expressions; displaying videos of landscapes and cultures from English-speaking countries broadens students' international perspectives and inspires them to explore and communicate in English. By constructing contextualized teaching models that closely link English learning with both real-life and virtual contexts, students can practice English actively in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere, thereby enhancing their language application abilities^[3].

3.2 Promoting Differentiated Instruction to Meet Individual Learning Needs

The English proficiency and learning abilities of rural junior high school students vary widely, making it

difficult for a uniform teaching model to meet all students' needs. Therefore, promoting differentiated instruction has become an urgent necessity.

First, precise student grouping and level differentiation should be implemented. Based on entrance test results, classroom performance, and homework completion, students can be divided into three levels: basic, intermediate, and advanced. Basic-level students, who have weak foundations, should focus on consolidating fundamental knowledge; intermediate students should strengthen their application abilities; and advanced students should be encouraged to engage in independent learning and inquiry. Second, teaching goals and content should be tailored to each level. For basic-level students, instruction should focus on mastering essential vocabulary and grammar from the textbook. Intermediate-level students can receive additional training in reading comprehension and writing, while advanced-level students may be guided to participate in English competitions or read original English texts. Finally, a multi-dimensional assessment system should be applied. For basic-level students, evaluation should emphasize progress and effort to build confidence; for intermediate-level students, the focus should be on learning processes and strategies; and for advanced-level students, assessments should highlight creativity and comprehensive language competence. This approach ensures that every student achieves a sense of accomplishment at their own level and experiences personalized growth.

3.3 Strengthening Cooperative Learning to Develop Collaboration and Thinking Skills

Enhancing cooperative learning is an effective means of cultivating students' collaboration and critical thinking abilities in rural junior high school English teaching. Rational grouping is the foundation of cooperative learning. Teachers should form heterogeneous groups based on students' English proficiency, personality traits, and learning abilities, ensuring each group includes students with varying strengths and perspectives. This not only enriches the discussion process with diverse viewpoints but also fosters peer learning and mutual progress. Clear task design and role allocation are equally essential. Teachers can design challenging and open-ended

group tasks such as English short play creation or thematic research projects. Each group member should have a specific role—such as information collector, recorder, or presenter—so that everyone understands their responsibilities and develops a strong sense of ownership. During group activities, teachers should monitor and guide the process, encouraging students to communicate actively, question boldly, and inspire each other. When groups encounter difficulties, timely guidance from the teacher can help broaden their perspectives. After each activity, teachers should organize reflection sessions to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of group cooperation.

Through such practices, students not only improve their collaboration skills but also strengthen their critical and creative thinking. This interactive, student-centered approach injects new vitality into English learning and promotes deeper engagement with the language.

3.4 Utilizing Multimedia and Online Resources to Broaden Teaching Dimensions

English teaching in rural junior high schools is often constrained by limited resources. The effective use of multimedia and online resources can greatly expand teaching dimensions and improve instructional quality. Multimedia tools help visualize abstract knowledge. For instance, when teaching vocabulary, teachers can display vivid images or play videos featuring standard pronunciations, enabling students to intuitively grasp word meanings and pronunciation. When explaining grammar, animated demonstrations of grammatical structures and applications can make abstract rules concrete and comprehensible, thereby enhancing students' understanding and retention. Online resources provide abundant teaching materials. Teachers can guide students to use online English learning platforms to access authentic English-language content such as movies, radio programs, and e-books. These resources expose students to genuine English expressions and broaden their cultural horizons. Meanwhile, teachers can also use the internet to search for the latest information and research findings in English education, integrating them into lessons to ensure the content keeps pace with contemporary developments. Furthermore, online tools facilitate interactive communication between teachers and students, as

well as among peers. Teachers can use online teaching platforms to organize class discussions or answer students' questions, while students can use social networking tools to exchange learning experiences and share resources. This breaks the limitations of time and space, fostering a more engaging and effective English learning experience.

3.5 Optimizing Teaching Evaluation with a Focus on Core Competency Development

In rural junior high school English teaching, optimizing evaluation systems is of great importance for promoting the development of students' core language competencies. Traditional assessment methods tend to overemphasize exam results, which are overly simplistic and fail to reflect students' comprehensive English abilities and literacy. To address this issue, a diversified evaluation system should be established, assessing multiple aspects of student performance. On one hand, evaluation content should be expanded. In addition to assessing students' mastery of linguistic knowledge—such as vocabulary and grammar—greater attention should be paid to practical language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Moreover, students' learning attitudes, teamwork, and creativity should also be considered. For example, during group activities, evaluations can focus on students' participation and ability to collaborate effectively. On the other hand, diversified evaluation methods should be adopted. Besides teacher assessments, student self-evaluation and peer evaluation should be encouraged. Self-evaluation enables students to reflect on their learning process and identify weaknesses, while peer evaluation fosters mutual learning and progress. For instance, after an oral presentation, students can evaluate each other's pronunciation and fluency. By optimizing the evaluation system, teachers can gain a more comprehensive and objective understanding of students' learning progress, provide targeted guidance, and promote the holistic development of English core competencies. This

approach lays a solid foundation for students' long-term English learning and future development^[4].

Conclusion

In the vast yet challenging field of rural junior high school English education, exploring strategies to enhance teaching effectiveness holds great significance and long-term value. By constructing contextualized teaching models, students can cultivate an interest in language use through engaging learning experiences. Differentiated instruction can more precisely meet students' individual learning needs. Strengthening cooperative learning effectively nurtures collaboration and critical thinking skills. The integration of multimedia and online resources broadens the dimensions of teaching and enriches learning outcomes. Together, these strategies complement and reinforce one another, injecting renewed vitality into rural English teaching. Looking ahead, continuous innovation and optimization of teaching strategies are essential to steadily improve the quality of English education in rural junior high schools, thereby supporting the comprehensive development of students' English proficiency and literacy.

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