The Application of SSM in English Learning, Teaching and Assessment Management

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Abstract: College English learning, teaching and assessment is undertaking more than 35 years in China, among which, the educational management is debatable. The traditional way of college English Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) management is facing challenge, and thus needs to be done from a new perspective. This paper firstly introduces a new perspective from Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology (SSM). Based on this, the application of SSM, which may be practically beneficial for college English education is articulated. Finally a number of conclusions are drawn with regard to the efficiency of college English education.

1. Introduction

Chinese college English learning is a popular which attracts the attention of many formal students for different purposes, for example, the purpose of different levels of English proficiency of study aboard or for entrance examination of postgraduate. Teaching of college English is also a very challenging work for English educators and/or college teachers and researchers(Zhao,2017), as different opinions regarding to the assessment of efficient teaching are proposed, which directly lead to the management of college English education.

Traditional English learning, teaching and assessment management functions in the past three decades, and has positive roles in training qualified graduates in various positions that the society demands. However, the new and rapid social development requires new and fresh college English management for learning, teaching and assessment in China (Gao,2015; Ren, 2010)resulting in challenge for the traditional management of college English learning, teaching and assessment management.

Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) was first developed by Peter Checkland (1981), with the purpose to bring about improvement in areas of social concern. Realization of the purpose was by means of activating people involved in ideally never-ending cycle of a learning situation.

One of the important features of SSM is the flexibility, allowing the problem solver to tackle soft problems. There are seven-stage process of SSM Mode1 (see Figure 1): problem situation considered problematical (stage1), problematical situation expressed (stage2), root definitions of relevant purposeful activity systems (stage3), conceptual models of the systems names in the root definitions (stage4), comparison of models and real world (stage5), changes: systemically desirable culturally feasible (stage6), and action to improve the problematical situation (stage7).

It can be seen clearly in figure 1 that the seven-stage is closely related and coherent. Stage1, stage2, stage5, stage6, stage7 take place in the real world, while stage3 and stage4 are re conceptual thinking of the real world.
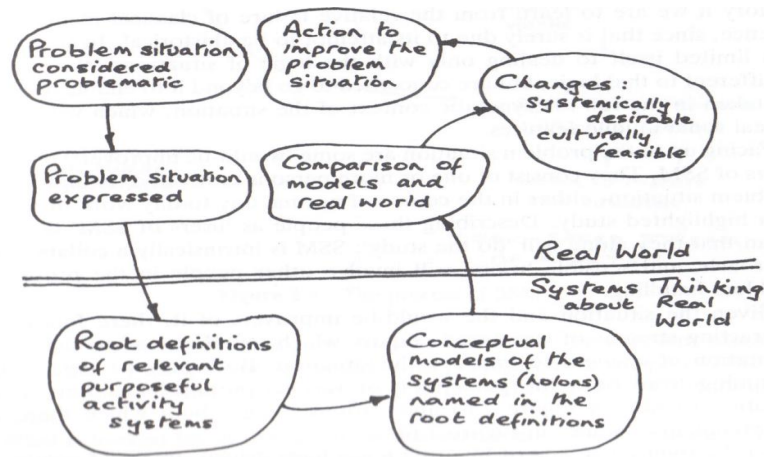
Figure 1 The conventional seven-stage model of SSM Mode1

2. The Necessity and Application of SSM in College English Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The key element of SSM involves quality control, which concerns quality improvement, involving various measures taken. For universities and colleges to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of English education, it is necessary to strengthen the role and responsibility of top management for the quality management system, and reduce the mandatory requirements for college English education documentation, not only for English educators (teachers), but also for college students. On one hand, the leadership of university and/or college shall establish a series of scientific and efficient teaching quality management system of college English, i.e. module coordinator system at college level. On the other hand, the system is featured for "de-administration" requirements of the college in China, which loosens relative unnecessary heavy burdens of the teachers and students, leaves much space for college English teachers and students autonomy in the English classroom, and exerts their subjective initiatives. To prevent the phenomenon of "understanding management" on the surface level and not respecting knowledge and academics on the deep level, to stimulate teacher-student harmonious classroom enthusiasm is necessary. To set the related quality improvement goals can fulfill the necessity, which can be described in the following sections.

Each organization at the university in China should set quality improvement goals in college English, and decompose the quality improvement goals into the various departments and units of the organization to form a target management system for quality improvement goals. Specific requirements might be as follows:

2.1. Integration of Quality Improvement and Teaching Goals

Quality improvement goals and teaching goals should be closely integrated in college English learning, teaching. Combining with the actual conditions of the university and/or college, gerents of the university shall determine the goals of English education and the objectives of English quality education in accordance with the principle of comprehensively implementing education and comprehensively improving the quality of college students. In a given college, it seems that the quality of English education and the guaranteed quality of management are inseparable from each other.

Closely related to this, the quantitative and qualitative paradigms shall be combined in college English education. The goal of each English learning and teaching module should be specific. At the beginning of the school year, the teaching plan of the foreign language school year cannot be determined by subjective experience or by making a guess. This is fatal to the English teaching quality management because academics may not fully understand how much they should achieve in order to meet the established English teaching standards. The plan has led to a certain degree of blindness in arranging teaching activities of college English, and as a result, the quality of college

English teaching has been greatly reduced to a certain level.

2.2. Combination of Short-term Improvement and Long-term Effectiveness

Short-term improvement and long-term effectiveness of college English at different level should be combined. Formulating plans and annual plans for quality improvement and the corresponding measures should be concrete and feasible (Cai et al, 2006). In so doing, it is required not only to have a school year plan but also have a day plan, a week plan, and a month plan for quality control of college English management..

Correspondingly, the organization of quality improvement of English learning and teaching might play its related role to guarantee realization of quality control of English education. Its function should cover the following aspects. Firstly, it is to put forward guidelines, strategies and objectives for quality improvement, clarify guiding ideology, and support and coordinate the quality improvement activities of all units and departments within the organization. Each university/college can establish a quality improvement management team headed by the head of the university, composed of members of the counselors, teachers, and supervision teams. Secondly, it is to organize cross-department quality improvement activities, identify their objectives and allocate the resources needed to meet the needs of quality improvement activities. Thirdly, it is to encourage each member of the organization to carry out quality improvement activities related to his or her job and coordinate the development of these activities. The head of the department shall strictly implement the duties, perform duties, administer the university in accordance with the law, be in-depth and pragmatic, and be able to organize and guide the teachers to implement quality education. The leaders are responsible for checking the management loopholes. Teachers mainly reflect on and learn from the teaching activities of other teachers, but they have to monitor those lazy or perfunctory teaching activities. Last, review and evaluating the progress of quality improvement activities are necessary. Every month or every semester it is required to meet to inform those who have a problem or violating disciplines, and reward outstanding teachers as well.

Hence, quality management plan for English teachers and college students is a must. Firstly, it should strengthen school management and seek fundamental knowledge of English proficiency. Administration staff should be solid, not arbitrarily, and not superficially affixed, so that the requirements for the quality control is overseen, and every staff should get immersed in it. Principals and teachings have truly focused on moving down, working down, putting emphasis on teaching, mastering first-hand materials, and enhancing the pertinence and effectiveness of teaching guidance and services.

Secondly, it is needy to update concepts and innovation. College English teachers are required to conscientiously study new teaching theories, refresh their minds with new ideas, firmly establish quality awareness, and make everyone understand that quality is the lifeline of the college, and consolidating education quality is the ideological basis for quality improvement. We have to implement college management with new postures and new methods to create a new campus style and be recognized by both parties of academics and students, the masses, and the community. Carefully organizing teachers to contact the actual learning quality education theory and related documents is crucial in this regard. The test scores of the school year are not used as the only basis for evaluating the rewards of teachers. Meanwhile, it is a must to strengthen the leadership and management of teaching work, and improve the teaching management system. A dean is focused on teaching work, and goes deep into classrooms and teaching and research groups, and instructs teachers to improve teaching as well. The Dean shall have no less than 20 sessions per semester.

Improving the quality of English classroom teaching is the key point. Classroom is the main battlefield to improve the quality of college English teaching. The quality of teaching depends largely on the efficiency of the classroom, which requires the majority of teachers to use new ideas, proceed from the reality of classroom dynamic development, choose correct and flexible teaching methods, and strive to achieve the organic integration and unity of the "three-dimensional" integration. Teaching methods should be instructive and motivating (Ren, 2010). It is wise to

creatively use teaching materials, use lesson plans, and prevent the mechanical phenomenon from copying the bad phenomena. In addition, it seems necessary to thoroughly change the teaching methods of "wearing new shoes and taking the old road", which means no change for teaching method. At the same time, updating teaching methods is needed to be done. By means of modern teaching methods, academics are encouraged to use image, intuitive teaching aids, and courseware to teach as much as possible, open up more channels of information for teachers and students as much as possible, provide more educational resources, and let modern education tools grow for the increasing need of teachers.

The quality of college student behavior has direct impact on the quality of college English teaching atmosphere, which clearly affects the quality of the subject teaching. Therefore, the improvement of the quality of the discipline might be started from the student's behavioral habits. Every week, the school develops an intensive training of behavioral habits. The class formulates a program of students' behavioral habits and learning habits and intensive training (Zhao, 2017). A plan for one week and one month and should be implemented every day. Strengthen classroom management and strictly control students skipping classes and dropping out of school are for those violating principles. Organizing students to participate in social welfare and social practice activities should be highly advocated. Focus on cultivating talents that are actually needed by society should be made.

3. Conclusion

The paper is to apply SSM in College English learning, teaching and assessment management. It seems that more rational and effective management to use SSM to improving the complex, messy and situations of traditional College English learning, teaching and management in China. The seven stages of SSM is a learning circle which can help us to understand, control and improve the problematical situations of through the teaching and assessment management.

Furthermore, the application of SSM in College English education can help us to structure the classroom discussion about the complex and messy traditional problematical situation and its improvement in current English college education, which might tailor for the demands of rapid changes of social development for English.

Acknowledgement

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