



Exploring the Blended English Teaching Model of Applied Colleges and Universities Based on PBL

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Abstract

This paper firstly introduces the importance of foreign language teaching reform, points out the key role played by foreign language education and the challenges it faces in the current society. Subsequently, this paper elaborates on the project-based learning theory, combined with the dynamic model of circular language curriculum design, to construct a blended English teaching methodology. Finally, the paper points out the current problems and possible solutions in this area, as well as the significance of this research.

Subject Areas

Linguistics

Keywords

Project-Based Learning, Blended Learning, English Teaching Reforms

1. Background of the Study

With the accelerated advancement of education informatization, the wave of “Internet+” teaching has brought about a systematic change in foreign language teaching. The University English Teaching Guide (2020 Edition) clearly proposes that colleges and universities should make full use of information technology and implement blended teaching. The Action Plan of Education Informatization 2.0 actively advocates the construction of a large platform of “Internet+ Education” and the comprehensive improvement of teachers’ and students’ information literacy, and strives to build a new mode of talent cultivation under the conditions of “Internet+”. Cultivating local English application talents is the fundamental cultivation goal of college English teaching in applied undergraduate colleges and

universities [1]. As an important part of applied college education, college English teaching has an irreplaceable and important role in cultivating talents with comprehensive application ability. Therefore, at present, the construction of this course is facing new opportunities and new challenges, and it needs to be further improved.

2. Research Significance

At the theoretical level, this study is based on the theoretical foundation of project-based learning (PBL) for blended teaching practice research, and uses survey questionnaires and other methods to study and analyze teaching results. Current research in this field combining multiple resources and technological tools is insufficient. There are few studies that combine online and offline teaching modes under the theoretical framework of PBL. Therefore, this study is innovative at the theoretical level. At the practical level, most of the current PBL-based studies discuss its role in language learning and content learning in the fields of medicine and engineering. There are few studies on university English programs in this field. Therefore, this study has reference value for the reform of university English courses at the practical level.

3. Overview of the Current Status of Domestic and International Research

Current theoretical research on PBL focuses on exploring a framework for the application of PBL in foreign language teaching [2]. For example, Fried-Booth's [3] findings examined three aspects: language, learner and teacher. "The Project Framework, proposed by Beckett and Slater [4], consists of two main components, a planner and a project log, and is designed to assist learners in language learning and content and to enhance their personal competence through project-based instruction. Slater [5] proposed an explicit teaching model based on project-based learning and combined the project-based English language teaching model with the knowledge framework proposed by Mohan [6]. In addition, empirical studies in the field explore its impact on language learning and content learning, as well as personal literacy development, and also explore students' and teachers' attitudes and perspectives on this learning approach. For example, the findings of Li Li and Du Jiemin [7] proved that participation in project-based learning is conducive to the development of learners' self-directed learning and critical thinking skills, and that there is a significant improvement in learners' ability to locate documents, search for information, process information, and communicate information. Yin Zhang and Wenhong Song [8] studied in depth the evaluation of learners and teachers in project-based teaching practice. Zuo Xiuyuan, Zheng [9] argued that when adopting cooperative learning modes such as project-based learning, it is necessary to help the group to form a good motivation through guiding measures, such as standardizing the rules of cooperation, precise cooperative tasks, and supervising the process of cooperation. There is a problem that various

resources and technical means cannot be effectively integrated in the current related research. Therefore, this project takes applied undergraduate colleges as an example and utilizes the Smart Teaching Cloud Platform to conduct research on the design of English blended courses based on the concept of PBL.

4. Theoretical Framework of the Study

Project-based learning (PBL) is a methodology that combines language and content, reflecting the idea of student-centered education [10] [11]. PBL is derived from the idea of “learning by doing” put forward by Dewey in the early 20th century, which is based on the theory of social constructionism and draws on situated learning, social interaction, and cognitive tools [12] [13]. It has its roots in Dewey’s idea of “learning by doing” in the early 20th century, which is based on social constructionism and draws on situated learning, social interaction, and cognitive tools [14]. The method was introduced to foreign language teaching in the late seventies. Compared to traditional teaching methods, project-based learning is a “student-centered” approach that combines language and content. This approach is effective in improving students’ application in practice [15]. Communicative behaviors based on practical needs not only provide students with intelligible language output, but also positively affect language learning on several levels, including motivation, professional competence, and student-centeredness.

Systematicity is emphasized in the design of project-based learning language courses, and Nunan [16] first integrated the three phases of the “trilogy” of planning, implementation, and evaluation and emphasized the systematic and integrated nature of the three phases. Currently, the teaching model of language courses has embarked on the path of “dynamic paradigm”, and the dynamic model of ring language course design proposed by Nation & Macalister is an important direction of international research on language course design in recent years. The model is divided into three layers (see **Figure 1**): the inner ring focuses on content and sequencing, format and presentation, and monitoring and assessing around the teaching objectives, while the outer ring focuses on principles, presentation, and organization. The outer ring focuses on principles, needs, and environment, and the inner ring plus the outer ring form the teaching process, which is then revised through the method of “evaluation” to achieve the teaching purpose. The overall teaching model is a more flexible and dynamic system (See **Figure 1**).

5. Reform Implementation Methods and Classroom Content

The course makes full use of information technology, analyzes the classroom teaching ecosystem from a holistic and dynamic perspective, and builds a balanced ecosystem for teaching cross-cultural business communication. The specific teaching design of the project-based blended university English course includes the following four parts:

- 1) Pre-learning: Students first obtain relevant pre-learning materials, such as text, video, audio, etc., from the Smart Teaching Cloud Platform to understand

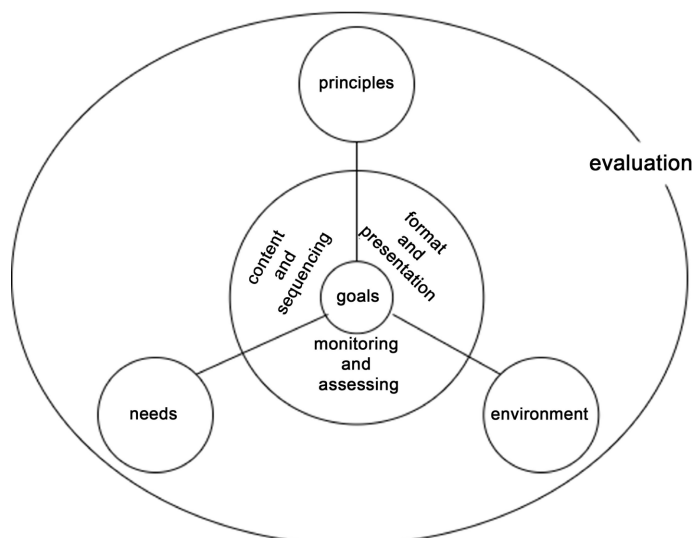


Figure 1. A dynamic model of cyclic language curriculum design (Nation & Macalister, 2010).

the content of the lectures in an all-round way. On this basis, students give full play to their independent discovery and exploration ability, and combine their actual situation with their own pre-study materials to further find relevant learning materials and timely feedback to the teacher, who will screen and upload them to the Smart Teaching Cloud Platform. At the same time, the teacher will evaluate the students' preparation through the background data of the Smart Teaching Cloud Platform in real time.

2) Classroom lectures: Teachers utilize one classroom hour to conduct lectures according to the actual situation of the students, and make comprehensive use of teaching methods such as the task teaching method, the think-pair-speak teaching method and the case teaching method. Through diversified teaching methods, the teacher guides students to think independently and learn the relevant basic knowledge systematically. In another lesson, the teacher divides the students into two groups, each of which carries out independent learning online in one lesson; at the same time, the other group takes turns to carry out a live simulation of the content of the independent learning, and the teacher and classmates ask questions in real time.

3) After-class training and expansion: complete the accompanying test on the Smart Classroom cloud platform to consolidate and self-test what you have learned in class, find out what you have missed in time, and check for gaps. Students will discuss the classroom messages on the smart classroom cloud platform, and the teacher will answer them in time. Through the smart classroom cloud platform, students can obtain the expansion resources uploaded by teachers in advance and carry out in-depth independent learning. At the same time, the teacher through the platform data real-time statistics on student review, and according to student feedback, adaptive adjustment of the curriculum plan.

4) Simulation exercises: students are divided into groups to explore and

research knowledge inside and outside the classroom, organize the knowledge system, analyze and design a real thematic communication scenarios, and make the final task results through the video form to show the communication thematic scenarios design ideas. At the same time, the students will evaluate each other and the teacher will give feedback in time.

6. Research Innovations

As far as the research methodology is concerned, this study is based on the theoretical foundations of PBL for blended instructional design and the use of questionnaires and other methods to study and analyze instructional outcomes. The current study, on the other hand, discusses its role in language and content learning and personal literacy development, and there are insufficient studies that combine multiple resources and technological tools. Meanwhile, few studies have been conducted on teaching and learning in combination with blended learning methods under the framework of PBL theory. Therefore, this paper is based on PBL theory for blended instructional design, which is innovative in terms of research methodology.

In terms of research objects, current PBL-based research discusses its role in language learning and content learning in the fields of medicine and engineering, as well as learners' and teachers' attitudes and perceptions of the learning method. As a result, there are few studies on university English courses in this field of research, and even fewer course studies on university English courses with the help of the Smart Teaching Cloud Platform. Therefore, this study is innovative in exploring the instructional design of college English courses with the help of the Smart Teaching Cloud platform based on the PBL theoretical framework.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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