



# On Exploration and Practice of Blended Teaching Design of Morality Cultivation in College English Course Instruction

—Taking the Case Teaching *Leadership* as an Example

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## Abstract

The effective coupling of morality education and all courses is a new challenge for college education in the new era. Promoting comprehensively the morality construction of the curriculum is a strategic measure for colleges to implement morality cultivation among students. Under the guidance of *Deeper Learning Cycle*, and based on the course feature, the current paper, taking the case teaching *Leadership* as an example, presents the blended teaching design of morality cultivation in college English course instruction through the following steps: setting moral-related teaching objectives, restructuring teaching content to implement moral education, and deep-learning based integration of implicit morality cultivation into the explicit language teaching, hoping to provide some suggestions and reference for the innovation and development of morality cultivation in course instruction.

## Subject Areas

Language Education

## Keywords

Morality Cultivation in Course Instruction, Deep Learning in Blended Teaching, College English Course, Case Teaching

## 1. Introduction

As is universally known that improving the quality of college students is the call of the times, it leads a direction for the current university education reform, which is to strengthen morality education for the all-around development of college

students (Luo Hexiang, 2008) [1]. The essence of morality cultivation in course instruction lies in “cultivating students by virtue”, highlighting the educational function of the courses and the student-centered concept. When it comes to college English courses, morality cultivation requires organically combining the content, requirements and principles of morality cultivation with the construction of the course knowledge systematically and scientifically. Specifically speaking, morality cultivation asks that college English teaching should pay attention to the internal growth and development of students in the process of language learning, focus on the dimensions of teaching thoughts, emotions and values, and put morality cultivation through the teaching goal setting, teaching material compilation, teaching activity design and implementation, teaching evaluation and other links (Xu Jinfen, 2021) [2].

Academia practically discusses the way of morality cultivation in college English teaching, most of which are the personal experience of teachers, lacking the guidance of systematic theories (Luo Hexiang, 2008; Yue Hongxing, 2010; Sun Lu, 2018) [1] [3] [4]. Research on morality cultivation in college English teaching under the guidance of systematic theories is comparatively scarce, of which the breadth and depth need to be further extended as well (Lou Yougen, 2022) [5]. Therefore, under the guidance of *Deeper Learning Cycle*, the paper, taking the case teaching *Leadership* as an example, constructs a blended teaching design model to carry out morality cultivation in college English course instruction through the following three steps: setting moral-related teaching objectives, restructuring teaching content to implement moral education, and deep-learning based integration of implicit morality cultivation into the explicit language teaching, aiming to effectively form a collaborative whole-person cultivating model, which will provide some suggestions and reference for the innovation and development of morality cultivation in course instruction.

The case teaching *Leadership* is selected from text A “*Leadership and the Art of Struggle*” of Unit 3 “*Interpreting Leadership*” from textbook “*New Target College English Integrated Course Book 3*” (Liu Zhengguang & He Lan, 2017) [6]. Chinese traditional ethical thoughts have always advocated that the benevolent love others, which is an important theory in Confucius’ ethics. The *College English Teaching Guide* also clearly points out that college English curriculum is a part of humanistic education in higher education, which is both instrumental and humanistic. While the core of humanity is people-oriented and carries forward people’s values. Leadership, as a core competence among people in the current world, is not only what a good leader should have, but also suitable for everyone, which is a quality worth cultivating among college students. In this case teaching, choosing a life-true topic “the embodiment of leadership in student community” as the cut-in point of the teaching, designs to make students understand the concept of leadership and the meaning of struggle, and try to cultivate students’ leadership quality, and help them establish a positive view of adversity, which is conducive to establishing a positive outlook on life and values.

## 2. Teaching Objective Resetting

The core of morality cultivation in college English course instruction is centered on student development, which is, in detail, to explore the characteristics and advantages of moral education in college English courses, and cultivate students' comprehensive language ability, cultural consciousness and thinking characters (Department of Higher Education, 2021) [7].

Objectives of talent cultivation of the course shift from such three levels as knowledge imparting, ability training and quality improvement to four levels. A higher level, which is morality shaping, is added, on the base of the previous three ones. With the fourth leading the previous three ones, the four organically combine, firmly establish the goal of providing whole-person education (Wu Zhaohui, 2019) [8].

This case teaching also bears four levels of the teaching objectives. In knowledge level, students are able to understand leadership and the art of struggle; students can express themselves more freely on leadership and struggle. In ability level, students can define a concept with different sentence patterns; students have a basic understanding of how to write an introductory paragraph; students are required to apply comparison and contrast writing skills to describe two subjects; students are able to draw mind maps to better understand a concept. In ability improvement level, students cultivate themselves leadership qualities in daily life; students develop a positive attitude to struggle. In morality shaping level, students build up positive life values which is from the personal perspective; students gain national pride for China's big country image which is from the national perspective.

## 3. Teaching Content Restructuring

Professor Liu Zhengguang and Yue Manman (2020) proposed that there were not enough materials relating to cultivating and improving students' moral sentiment in current college English textbooks, which mainly reflected in two aspects: one was the shortage of learning contents in college English textbooks to implement morality cultivation, and the other was the scattered contents, even there were [9]. By now there hasn't any textbook clearly putting forward promoting Chinese excellent traditional culture and the spirit of the times as the guiding principle of textbook compilation. And the practice design of each unit is also difficult to see the organic integration of morality cultivation elements into the learning of language knowledge. These deficiencies show that the restructuring of teaching contents is of great importance to effectively realize the goal of morality cultivation in course instruction.

The morality cultivation elements for this teaching design are selected mainly through two ways: firstly, excavate the common value orientation of China and the West's from the existing teaching materials; secondly, actively supplement the related teaching materials which contain morality cultivation elements.

### 3.1. Morality Cultivation Contents from Textbook

The content of the case teaching shows as follows: in knowledge level, it covers the definition of leadership, the qualities expected from a good leader and the art of struggle. In skill level, it teaches students the methods to give a definition as well as its patterns, the approach to write an introductory paragraph, the technique to use comparison and contrast, and the way to understand a concept better by drawing mind maps.

And from the textbook, the following contents related to morality cultivation can be drawn:

First, leadership qualities cultivation. Students imperceptibly interpret the importance of cultivating leadership qualities in daily life no matter whether he wants to be a leader or not.

Second, developing a positive attitude toward struggle.

1) The example of Steve Jobs to illustrate how great achievements Steve Jobs had obtained only after navigating through a number of challenges. And through the struggle, he was on his way to becoming one of the most influential leaders.

2) You must recast your struggle as positive learning experiences and view them as necessary steps in your development, which is called *the Struggle Lens View*.

3) Outcomes were influenced largely by how effectively leaders channeled their energies to accept and embrace change and adaptively engage in the struggle.

4) Failures often proved to be catalysts for future growth.

### 3.2. Morality Cultivation Contents from Supplementing Materials

For college English teaching, the basic connotation of morality cultivation mainly includes such aspects as the excellent traditional Chinese culture, the distinctive world culture, the spirit of the times and the thought of building a community with a shared future for mankind (Liu Zhengguang & Yue Manman, 2020) [9]. So in this case teaching, when restructuring the contents for morality cultivation, it presents the relationship between leadership and struggle by sharing attitudes toward struggle between Chinese and Western cultures, and the implied meaning of China's struggle in successfully fighting against difficulties or in space launching. Details are as following:

First, appreciation of Chinese governance theory. President Xi's remarks: A nation will be full of hope and country will have a brilliant future when its younger generations have ideals, ability, and a strong sense of responsibility, which is also the key leadership quality.

Second, translating exercises of Chinese old saying related to struggle. For example,

1) 孟子说：“天将降大任于斯人也，必先苦其心志，劳其筋骨，饿其体肤，空乏其身，行拂乱其所为，所以动心忍性，增益其所不能”。

2) 吃得苦中苦，方为人上人。

3) 种瓜得瓜，种豆得豆。

Third, analysis of the relationship between success and struggle through China's current news.

1) China's struggle before the great achievement in fighting against huge disaster.

2) China's struggle before the big success in space launching, for example, Beidou, the navigation satellite system.

Fourth, creating a value image to guide students. For example: apply *Huangshan pinus* to guide students to understand that "Grass sees but one spring, while man has but one life", and let students face up the reality, seize the opportunity and fulfill their life value.

Based on the analysis of students' learning situation, the teaching key and difficult points lie in how to guide students to understand such abstract concepts as leadership and the art of struggle. So in the teaching design the instructor introduces the methods of giving definitions and drawing mind maps to help students better understand abstract concepts. And other teaching key points focus on how to write an introductory paragraph and how to use comparison and contrast to describe two subjects. The design applies models and related assignment for students to imitate and to reproduce.

#### 4. Implementation of Morality Cultivation in Course Instruction

Combined with the course features, and borrowing the carrier of exercises, the design integrates the morality cultivation into the teaching process by focusing on the following ways.

##### 4.1. Guiding Theory—Deep Learning in Blended Teaching

Globalized talents in the 21st century need a variety of abilities, among which at the top of the line are communication and cooperation. Communication and cooperation abilities require students to be qualified with the consciousness of democracy, equality and openness, the spirit of understanding and tolerance, and the mind of sharing knowledge and thoughts (Yang Cuiping & Liu Fang, 2005) [10]. The cultivation of these two abilities is also the most important goal pursued by blended teaching.

Blended teaching emphasizes two points: one is the construction of learning community, and the other is emphasizing cooperative learning. Learning community emphasizes cooperation, interaction and communication. Learners in learning community learn to share ideas and knowledge, learn to fulfill their duties and obligations, and learn to respect the contribution of others. Learners build up trust among each other via open personal opinion expression and deep communication, establish a harmonious interpersonal relationship, and achieve common progress (Sun Youzhong, 2015) [11]. The learning community focuses on the communica-

tion and discourse among participants. With their self-management, self-restraint, and self-regulation in learning tasks, learners are the real subjects in the whole learning process. It means the adjustment of the teacher-student relationship. Teachers have changed the traditional dominant identity in the teaching process. They provide strategic guidance, and put up scaffolding for students when covering the learning tasks, during which learners' sense of responsibility can be cultivated (Zhang Hao, Wu Xiujuan, & Wangjing, 2014) [12].

For the case teaching, group discussion on open questions, brainstorming in writing, and teamwork when completing projects are all effective carriers to implement the blended teaching concept and cultivate the spirit of cooperative learning. So under the guidance of *Deeper Learning Cycle* (Figure 1), which was proposed by American scholars Eric Jensen and LeAnn Nickelsen (2010) [13], this teaching design creates the teaching model called *Deep Learning in Blended Teaching* (Figure 2), aiming to achieve morality cultivation in the course instruction effectively.

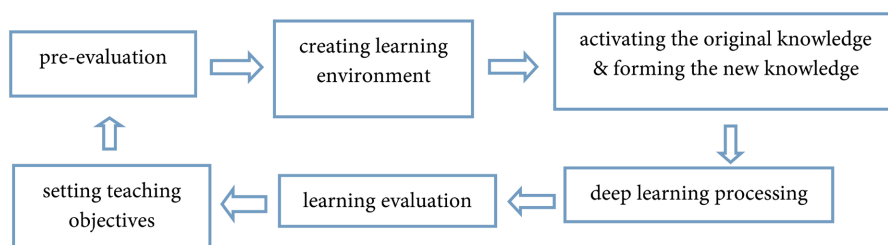


Figure 1. Deeper learning cycle.

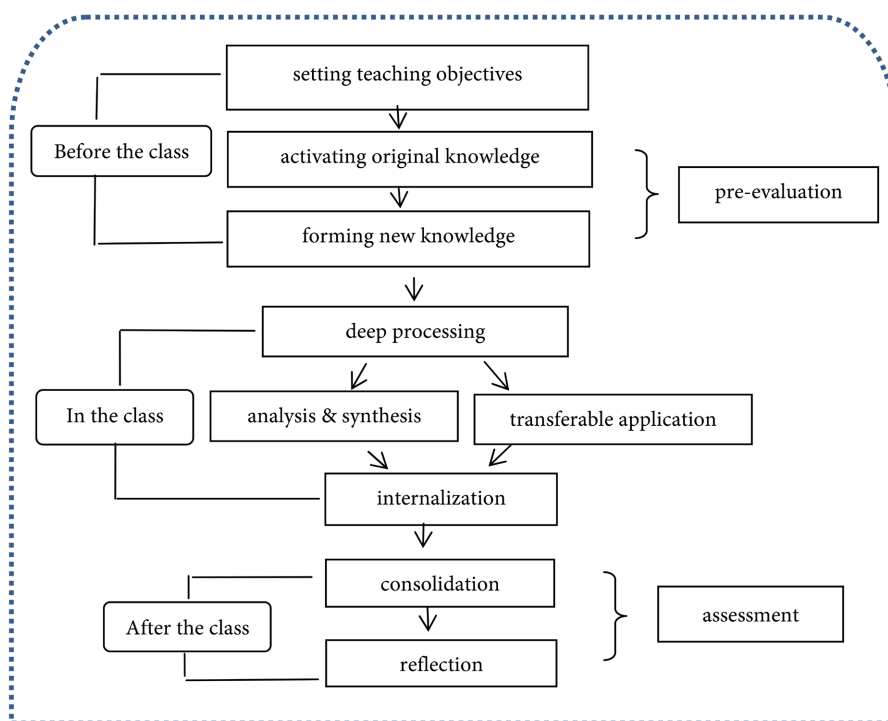


Figure 2. Deep learning in blended teaching.

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## 4.2. Teaching Methods Expansion

Based on *Deep Learning in Blended Teaching*, this teaching process applies the following teaching methods and initiatives.

### 4.2.1. Online and Offline Blended Learning

The online learning is based on Cloud Class App, which is taken as the teaching platform for this course. The teacher uses the various platform function modules, such as the resource plates, the cloud teaching materials, the group tasks and the discussion areas, to share the morality cultivation learning materials, issue the study task lists, carry out the study activities, collect the morality developing feedback and so on. The online tasks are mainly aimed to activate students' original knowledge and help them form the new knowledge.

The offline learning here mainly refers to the in-class discussion. With a lot of tasks are finished online out of the class, students spare more time focusing on in-class activities.

### 4.2.2. Problem-Based Learning

In the design of in-class activities, the teacher use practical problems to guide in-class activities. The transfer and application of knowledge is an important basis for the occurrence of deep learning. Transfer and application are not only for checking the learning results, but also the embodiment of learning style. This is also a simulated social practice in the process of learning (Guo Hua, 2016) [14]. Therefore, in the process of learning material supplement and teaching activities organization, the teacher bears practical problem consciousness in mind and carries out teaching activities according to the mode of “find problems—analyze problems—solve problems”.

### 4.2.3. Case-Based Learning

Case-based learning is an active teaching method. In the design of teaching process, the teacher introduces a case study which is related to students' life to arouse students' interest.

### 4.2.4. Team-Based Learning

Running through the whole teaching process, the interaction not only happens between students and the teacher, but also among students themselves. Students participate in the process of constructing knowledge, rather than simply receiving it (Peigang Liu, Yuting Zhang, & Junjie Zhao, 2021) [15]. The design of assignment is also team-based, supplemented by evaluation criteria to stimulate students' critical thinking. Meanwhile, during their group cooperation, students can experience what they have learned in the class to deal with the personal relationship, making the study serve the practical purpose. By the way, to get the best outcome of the teamwork, students are set into groups with heterogeneity.

## 4.3. Teaching Implementation Process

Based on *Deep Learning in Blended Teaching*, the teaching process is divided

into three stages: before the class, during the class and after the class.

#### 4.3.1. Pre-Class Autonomous Online Learning to Get Preliminary Understanding

In this pre-class stage, three online tasks are set on *Cloud Class App*.

1) Task 1, a case study. The leaders of the two student associations came into collision, due to the application for the same meeting room to hold a party for the same day. Ask students to explore how to solve the conflict and discuss about what kind of leadership qualities the leaders of the student associations should have. The purpose of the design is to arouse students' interest of the topic by introducing a practical problem.

2) Task 2, a video-clip learning. Watch the video “5 Keys to Inspiring Leadership”, and finish KWLQ form. K stands for *What I Know*; W stands for *What I Want to Find out*; L stands for *What I Learned*; Q stands for *More Questions*. The intent of the design is to let students have a brief grasp of leadership and explore topic-related knowledge which students want to learn; The KWLQ form provides the teacher with the reference for the following design of the teaching process and also provides students with a guide showing what they want to learn about the topic.

3) Task 3, previewing. Preview *Text A* and figure out its main idea and the outline, and draw a mind map of the solution of struggle—*the struggle lens view*. The design intent is to let students get familiar with the content and briefly know the attitude to struggle.

The pre-class autonomous online learning is set mainly to the pre-evaluation of students, and to activate students' original knowledge and help them form the new knowledge.

#### 4.3.2. In-Class Discussions to Realize Consolidation of the Knowledge and Deep Learning

The in-class part mainly includes the lead-in part, comprehension of the text, understanding the implied meaning of struggle and morality cultivation related to Chinese culture.

1) Two tasks for the lead-in part:

a) Guessing game: Who are they? The design intent is using a guessing game to warm up the class and let students briefly know who great leaders are.

b) Interpreting leadership through three questions: What is leadership? What makes a great leader? And how to cultivate leadership qualities? The design intent is to let students understand what is leadership and the traits or qualities expected from a great leader, and learn the sentence patterns for giving a definition.

In this part, *Johari Window Theory* can be applied, which is “largely broaden open area; practically identify blind area; properly expose to hidden area; actively explore unknown area”. By applying *Johari Window Theory*, can students be guided to master a method to know one better and develop good relationship with others?



2) Five tasks for the comprehension of the text:

a) Identifying the topic from the title, that is, to get the main idea of the passage according to the title and know the author's attitude.

b) Analyzing the technique to write an introductory paragraph. To learn three characteristics of writing an introductory paragraph—catching readers' interest, giving a general introduction to the topic, and containing a thesis statement.

c) Understanding the main body through comparison and contrast. To make students master the purpose of informative writing skills—comparison and contrast, which is to show similarities and differences between two subjects and highlight essential characteristics of one or more subjects. Moreover, to illustrate students to know how to use synonyms or antonyms, connectives and point-by-point & subject-by-subject writing patterns to write informative passages.

d) Drawing a mind map to understand the solution, *the struggle lens view*. To let students obtain the skill of drawing the mind map to better understand the logic of a passage and know a concept clearly through a diagram.

e) Drawing the conclusion for the text. To reemphasize the main point of the text.

3) Two tasks for exploring the implied meaning of struggle:

a) The struggle Steve Jobs confronted. Apply for Steve Jobs as an example to explore the implied meaning of struggle, which also teaches students to employ an example with features of being representative, typical and authoritative when they write an essay.

b) The great achievement Steve Jobs got after navigating through struggle. "Steve Jobs was on his way to becoming one of the most influential leaders of our time, and his life was a testament to personal growth, leadership development, and human potential." To point out the implied meaning of struggle which is similar to the saying *Failure is the mother of success*.

4) And two tasks for morality cultivation related to the Chinese culture:

a) Translating the Chinese sayings related to struggle.

Chinese sayings:

Example one: 孟子说：“天将降大任于斯人也，必先苦其心志，劳其筋骨，饿其体肤，空乏其身，行拂乱其所为，所以动心忍性，增益其所不能”。

Example two: 吃得苦中苦，方为人上人。

Example three: 种瓜得瓜，种豆得豆。

English versions:

Example one: "When heaven is about to place a great responsibility on a great man, it always first frustrates his spirit and will, exhausts his muscles and bones, exposes him to starvation and poverty, harasses him by troubles and setbacks so as to stimulate his spirit, toughen his nature and enhance his abilities" (By Mengzi).

Example two: Only those who endure the most become the highest.

Example three: No gains without pains.

b) Comparing the implied meaning of struggle between Chinese and Western

cultures.

“The hardest time is meant for the day of success which is not far away.” (By Napoleon Bonaparte)

### 4.3.3. Post-Class Assignment and Assessment

Three assignments are required in this part:

- 1) Writing an essay on relationship between success and struggle by comparing the current news using a “point-by-point” or “subject-by-subject” pattern (Individual work and T-S collaborative assessment). For example, China’s struggle before the great achievement in fighting against huge disasters; or China’s struggle before the big success in space launching, e.g. Beidou, the navigation satellite system.
- 2) Creating a morality image to guide students (Group work and peer assessment).
- 3) Study reflections on struggle (Individual work and teacher assessment).

## 5. Conclusions

Morality cultivation in course instruction is to integrate the course knowledge and skills with values, emotional character and self-management. More precisely, the development of a student’s values, emotional character, and self-management ability will be embedded in the process of foreign language knowledge and skill learning. This is necessary to do: explore the convergence points and complementary points of the basic requirements of English teaching and the teaching materials of moral education, and give full play to the carrier role of teaching materials, to provide support for realizing the morality cultivation in course instruction, to promote the depth and breadth of moral education (Xu Jinfen, 2021) [2].

Generally speaking, this teaching design chooses suitable teaching contents of moral education with moderate difficulty and sets complete and clear teaching objectives, which are based on output. Guided by *deep learning in blended teaching*, integrated with the teaching methods of online and offline blended learning, problem-based learning, case-based learning and team-based learning, the design aims to create a teaching process directing to deep learning in morality cultivation in college English course instruction. However, there is still room in the improvement for the design. For example, the time allocation for each part needs to be checked precisely in the teaching practice; the assessment for morality cultivation is not easy to be carried out spontaneously, and new assessment methods need to be found. And this design carries out most effectively only with students’ much effort out of the class.

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Dedicated to reforming the traditional teaching mode and exploring the diversified teaching methods, the research constructs a deep teaching model in college English under the guidance of deep learning theory to realize the combination of deep learning theory and practice. Focusing on the combination of the concept of deep teaching and its specific teaching steps, the research builds a deep teaching model of morality cultivation in college English course instruction. Through practice and empirical analysis, it comes to the conclusion that this deep teaching model effectively achieves the organic combination of knowledge system and value system, which realizes the value shaping of students.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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