

# A Research of the Course “Taishan Cultural Communication with the World” under Blended Learning Model and Outcome-Based Education Concept

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## Abstract

The course “Taishan Cultural Communication with the World” has been online and offline teaching and learning for two terms based on the theoretical ideas: Blended Learning and Outcome-Based Education. This paper uses the data from one semester to state how to carry out the program and the good results. At the same time disadvantages are also the points that should be taken into consideration. From the teaching and learning practice, students have benefited from the online videos, complementary materials and discussions; they need to be guided as well, especially the guidance offline to make up. Furthermore, the balance of time online and offline is a great challenge.

## Keywords

Blended Learning, Outcome-Based Education, Taishan Cultural Communication with the World

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## 1. Introduction

Blended Learning (BL)

As a hot topic, Blended or Blending Learning is student-centered and a combination of traditional classroom learning with techniques from computer-assistance, to adjust information online and offline effectively so as to achieve the goal of improving students' learning efficiency. From the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, BL began to be the topic in scholars' research internationally. Neumeier holds the Blended Learning is “a combination of face-to-face and computer-assisted learning in a single teaching and learning environment” [1].

Banados believes that Blended Learning is “a combination of technology and classroom instruction in a flexible approach to learning that recognizes the benefits of delivering some training and assessment online but also uses other modes to make up a complete training program which can Improve learning outcomes and/or save costs” [2]. HE states thoroughly from the origin of BL to the development periods and focuses on the different components of teaching and learning aspects calling on the attention of retrospection in these aspects. After discussion of theories, more researches are on how to “balance the computer assistance and classroom teaching in certain subjects or courses” [3]. Yang set a very good example in exploring BL in the course “English Communication in Daily Life” in EFL teaching [4]. A glimpse of CNKI, the key word Blended Learning would display more than ten thousand paper with different emphasis. This provides a good background and reference for carrying out practical study in the course “Taishan Cultural Communication with the World”.

#### Outcome-based Education (OBE)

Outcome-based Education is a concept of teaching based on result or the outcome of studies. It requires that teachers must know the requirements of their students when they are graduating. So teachers have to be well-prepared to design appropriate and effective methods to help students achieve these goals. As a new and innovative idea, OBE helps teachers design their teaching objectives, principles, course design and cultivating goals etc. in a result-oriented method. It is also students-centered, and teachers are the guide to cultivate and lead students to follow the curriculum and learn to study autonomously though with the help and guide of teachers. In this way OBE and BL are closely related and interrelated in teaching and learning, for teachers and students as well. After origination in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, many scholars had done research in the theories research, such as William G. Spady [5] and Kenn Martin [6]. Chinese scholars have also conducted theory and practice studies into areas such as theory discussion [7], Cultivation of University Teachers [8], application into certain courses [9] and combination with Blended Learning [10] and so on.

From the above theoretical introduction, BL and OBE put students as the center and teacher as the guide, and the ultimate purpose is to help students develop independently and autonomously in learning. They provide the possibility of dealing with all kinds of materials needed for teaching and learning when time is limited and they cannot be used effectively and thoroughly in class. As to the teaching and learning procedure, the role of students and teacher are usually the key point into carrying out the students-major role and teacher-guided role. So the course “Taishan Cultural Communication with the World” is trying to combine these two ideas together by using the platform Treenity (Zhihuishu).

## 2. Course Introduction

“Taishan Cultural Communication with the World” is a course by reading and appreciating writings of Taishan Culture in foreign languages (mainly English).

After reading, students will think about the main idea and try to introduce Taishan Culture in typical foreign languages in order to communicate effectively and successfully in intercultural environment.

Through the study and practice of this course, students can master the different stages of the development of foreign writings of Taishan culture from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the specific contents, main characteristics, representatives and main contributions to the overseas dissemination of Taishan culture. Students are able to critically read the records, understand the differences in the expression of Taishan culture between China and foreign countries, strive to demand the similarities of Taishan culture between China and foreign countries, form the ability to accurately express Taishan culture in foreign languages and carry out cross-cultural communication. These are the ultimate outcomes that teachers should be clear before the carrying out of teachings since the process is based on OBE and BL.

Characteristics of this course are: 1) it is based on broad reading of articles and books in English and other foreign languages from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the writers are of different status and from different countries with different cultural backgrounds and in different periods; 2) students are required not only to read and appreciate the articles or books, they have to be familiar with the writers and historical background so as to have a thorough understanding of the Taishan Culture; 3) the ultimate purpose of the course is that students have the abilities of communicating and discussing Taishan Culture in the perspective of the world; 4) there is only 1 credit for this course, and there are seven chapters which should be achieved in five weeks.

From the above introduction, it is easy to recognize the load of reading is very heavy in and after class and time period is highly pressed, therefore online assistance is in great urgency. Hence the application of Blended Learning is possible and feasible to carry the course to make it more effectively achieving the goal.

### 3. Methodologies

Taking BL and OBE theories into consideration and the author believe that each class and course has the unique characteristics. So the methodologies designed specially for the course by the author. As to the process carried out, the following points are taken into consideration: balance the time online and offline; teacher is the guide and students are the center; the ultimate outcomes are students' abilities in expressing Taishan culture from intercultural background. So in each step, these three aspects are considered.

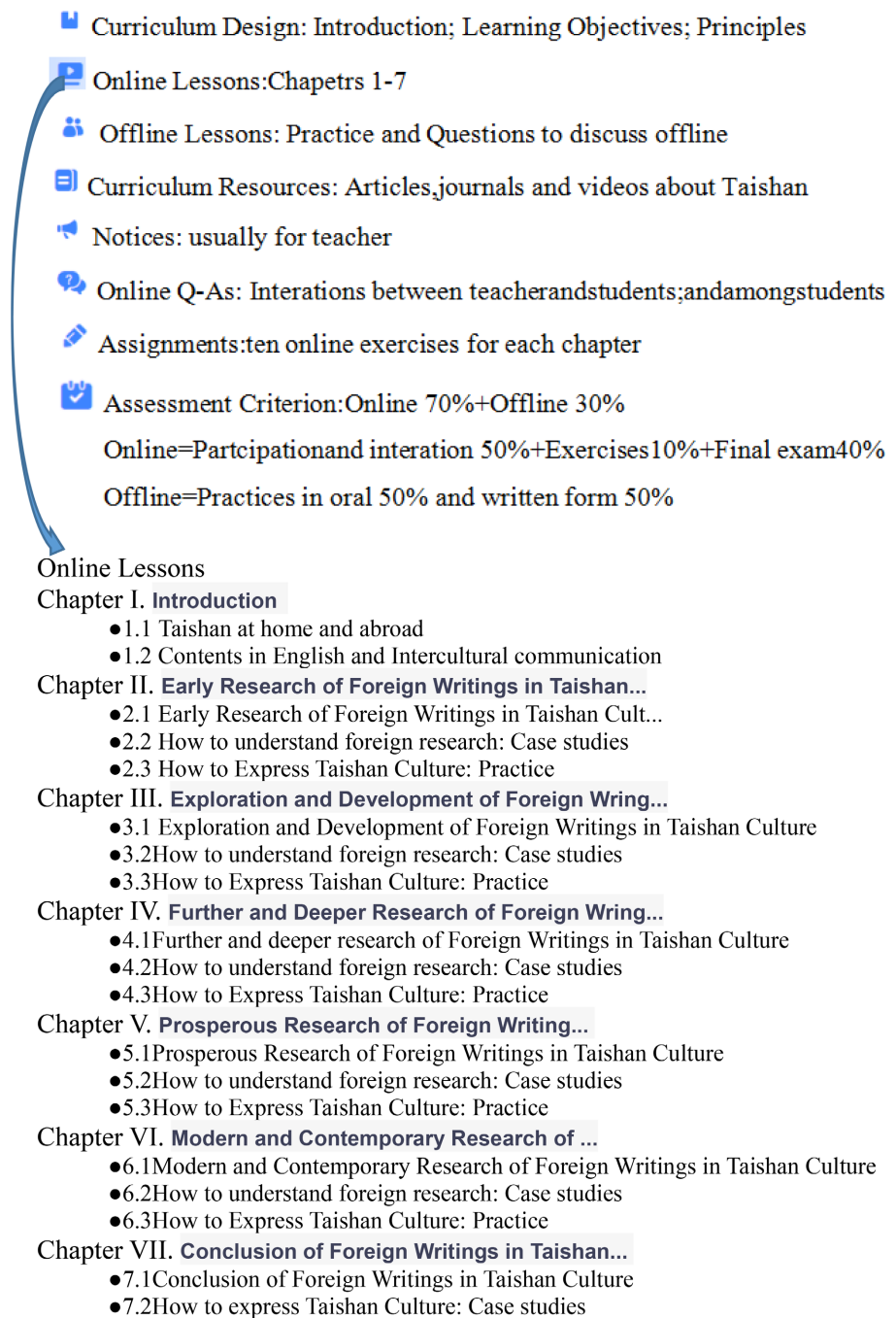
#### 3.1. Online

Treenity (Zhihuishu) is the online platform to provide students with all the information needed and it can be found on the Website:

<https://coursehome.zhihuishu.com/courseHome/1000077835/150065/19#onlineCourse>. Since time is limited and the load of reading and learning is heavy, the

online information is whole-inclusive (**Figure 1**).

From the above, “Curriculum Design” has explicitly showed how to carry out the online study, the objectives and principles required. “Online Lessons” are displayed with videos of teachers’ illustrations and power points. “Curriculum Resources” are articles, journals and videos about Taishan by teachers’ collections of foreign writings or their own publications. And these are used to act as students’ supplementary reading to broaden their eye views and further their understandings of Taishan culture. “Online Q-As” are acting as a field for interactions



**Figure 1.** Online information.

between teacher and students or among students. This is for solving problems and wiping out misunderstandings. After each chapter, there are ten exercises including multiple choice and T or F judgment for students to deal with. And after all the chapters, there are final exams auto-made by AI on the platform. These are acting as the “Assignments” online. “Assessment” online is decided also by the AI on the platform. So the data will show how students carry out their studies and their results.

Thus, “Online lessons”, “Curriculum Resources”, “Online Q-As” and “Assignments” are acting as the main way to lead students into autonomous learning. In each step, students are required to play the major role in learning: deciding what to learn, how much should be learnt, what are problems and how to solve them etc. As to the teacher, he/she is guiding the students to carry on the study fluently and successfully by giving in-time help when necessary.

### 3.2. Offline

After the online introduction, the advantage of supplying enough materials for reading and learning and the AI autonomous recording of students’ study and assessment is recognizable, however, it is still technical and mechanical and the teacher cannot make sure if students really achieved the goal and grasped the knowledge. Still, the teacher will wonder if students have the ability to understand, discuss and express Taishan Culture in typical English. And how to access students comprehensively? With these questions considered, the offline lessons are necessary to make up. As stated before that there are only five weeks offline lessons for teacher and students meet face to face, so for each week, questions from the students and from the “Online Q-As” should be well recorded and answers should be comprehensively prepared beforehand. What’s more, the teacher would provide chances for students to show their understandings of certain topic in English orally with background information from “Online Lessons” and “Recourses”. Assignments of translation or illustration in written forms are also required to access the learning results.

### 3.3. Balance of Time and Topics Online and Offline

Now that what online and offline should be done is clear, another important factor taken into consideration is the balance of time online and offline. As is shown, comparing with offline, the online occupies a greater lot of time. Although less time spent, the offline is usually guided by the teacher face to face, so it is easier to see if the students have achieved the goal or not. Therefore, each time offline, the teacher had better find out questions, follow the students’ progress and give suggestions on online studies to students in case of the problems covered. Take the following data (**Figure 2**) for example, it is easy for the teacher to guide the whole process.

As to topics, each chapter would arouse certain interests for students to think of and discuss. Due the limited time and knowledge, each topic would be more

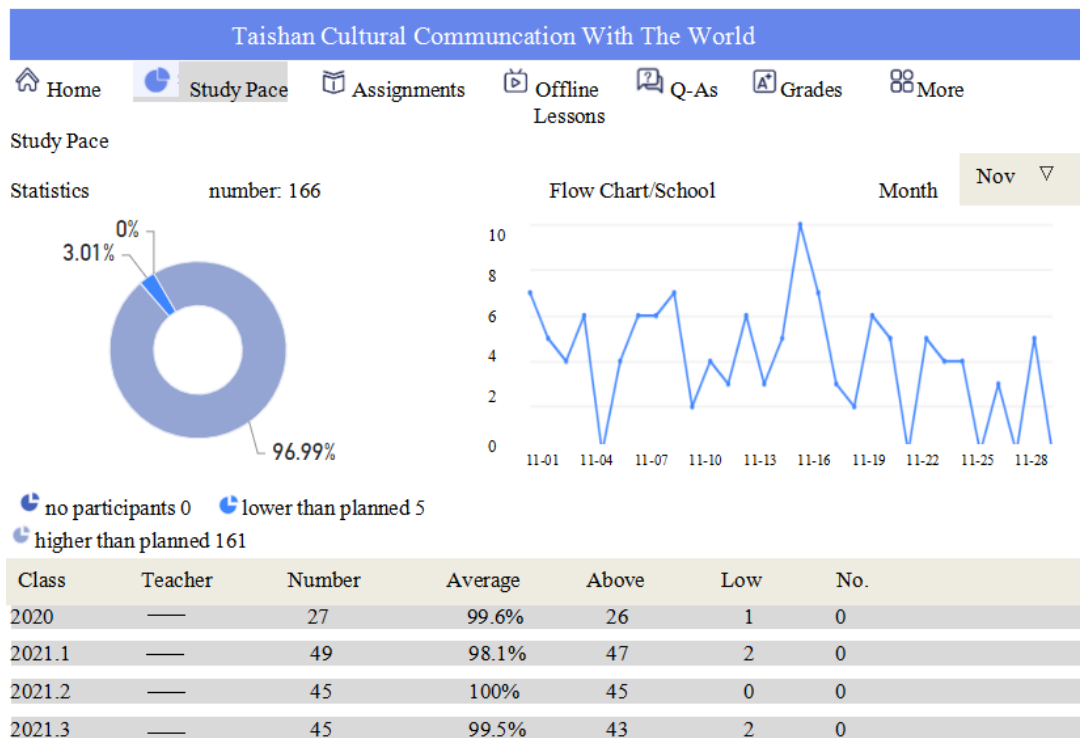


Figure 2. The guidance format online.

or less talked about without teacher’s help. It means that the teacher is guiding the whole process even students play the major role in learning. The teacher has to make sure the balance of topics under discussion, and provides as much knowledge as possible though there have been supplementary readings provided in “Curriculum Resources”. The following (Figure 3) is taken from students’ hottest discussed topics, and the teacher highlighted some to arouse students’ interest.

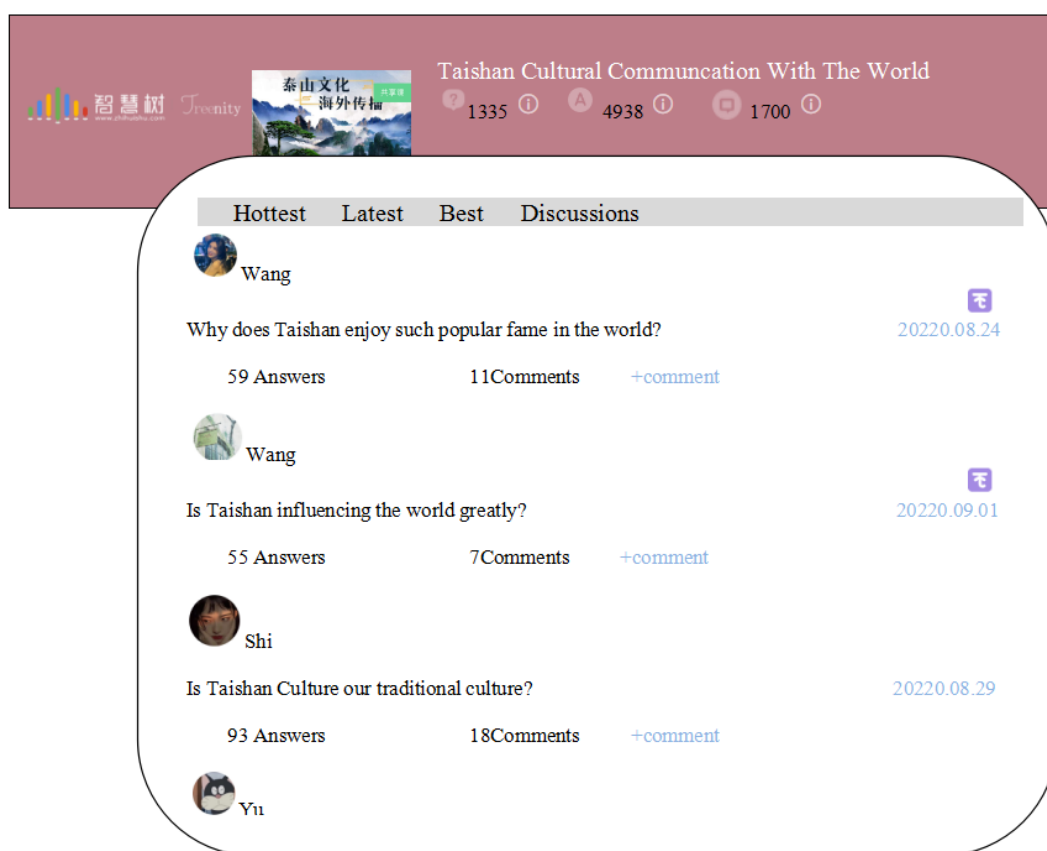
### 3.4. Result Analysis

#### Online

Assessments are composed by 70% online grades and 30% offline grades. The online assessment is autonomously decided by AI from the platform, and teacher is to guide in case there are exceptions, for example some students would forget the time to do finals or failing to take part in taking part in the interactive topic discussions. From the graph online, 100% students have passed all the requirements online, with 3.1% students’ grades are excellent, 59.5% are between 80 and 90, 32.1% are between 70 and 80, and 5.3% are between 60 and 70.

#### Offline

After the oral and written forms of assessments, 60% students can use English to translate or introduce some Taishan cultural relics, more than 30% students have chosen one of the foreign writers to introduce him/her experience and the background of his/her paper on Taishan culture. And less than 10% students can broaden their view to compare several similar topics and generalize the main



**Figure 3.** Students' hottest discussed topics.

idea. All in all, students have mentioned intercultural information more or less. They have successfully accomplished the objectives.

#### Exceptions

One of the disadvantages is that teachers have to follow online information all the way through the end of the semester, and some students are unwilling to carry on further study without teachers' urging or pushing forward. This consumes a lot of time and energy. Furthermore, this course is not so proper to open to students of seniors, since they are graduating and preparing for further future studies in postgraduate universities. Later, more considerations should be taken into.

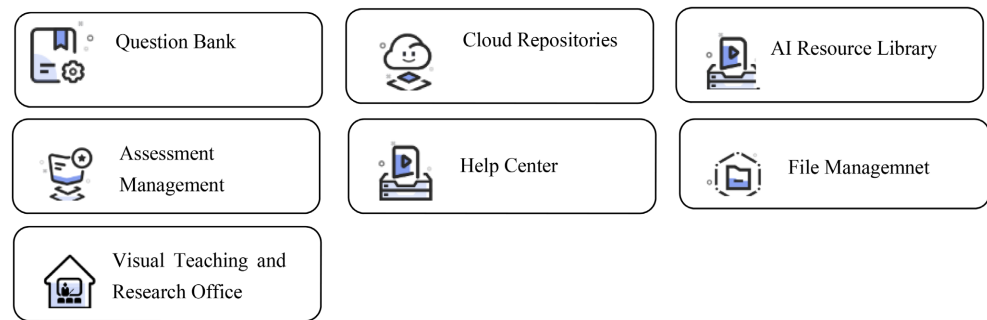
## 4. Conclusions

In order to have a satisfactory teaching and learning experience, the Treenity platform has also provided other items in the following (Figure 4) to help teachers and students to get many ways to achieve good results.

Up to now, after two durations of operation, "Questions Bank", "File Management" and "Cloud Repositories" have been used. Later "visual teaching and research office" will be put into instruction for teachers from similar courses.

Besides, students are finding more chances to practice and improve themselves. Three students in 2022 have taken part in the "2022 FLTRP Talent Cup

## More Effective Teaching Tools



**Figure 4.** More effective teaching tools.

Competition of International Communication Competence Displayed by Short Videos”, two students won the second prize and one got the third prize. More than ten students went to fieldwork in Dai Temple to learn to express Taishan culture in English. These are totally good results other than school teaching or learning.

To sum up, with the help of Treenity, the course “Taishan Cultural Communication with the World” can be put Blended Learning method and OBE idea into practice for two semesters. Although more trials will produce more problems and solutions, more satisfactory results will be achieved at the same time.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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