A Study on the Design of the Blended Learning Mode in College English

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Abstract—**This paper explored the design of the Blended Learning mode of the College English teaching in universities. The paper introduced the principles, objectives, details of the design, and the evaluation plan of the Blended Learning mode. It also provides a sample to illustrate. The study on the mode of Blended Learning offers a concept and examples for sustainable development of English teaching reform in universities.**

Keywords—*Blended Learning mode; College English teaching; course design*

I. INTRODUCTION

Blended Learning is not a new concept. In 2002, Driscol, formally put forward the concept of Blended Learning, which aroused the attention of higher education. "The combination of online learning and traditional face-to-face classroom teaching is the most well-known trend in the field of higher education today." [1] Only because of the current social development and the rapid grown of modern technology, the concept of Blended Learning has drown more and more attention in the education circle. Today, more research materials and technology on Blended Learning are available. Various theories and concepts related to Blended Learning also emerge. Many scholars have analyzed the problems that may be encountered in the implementation of Blended Learning theoretically and the strategies are discussed to solve them. In addition, many educators have studied the specific citation of Blended Learning on the basis of theory .

Blended Learning advocates the combination of traditional classroom face-to-face teaching (F2F Learning) and Online Autonomous Learning (e-Learning), so as to integrate Blended "teaching" and "learning" organically [2], which is the reconstruction of traditional Teaching and Learning model. Through educational reform and the rearrangement of teaching process at different levels of universities, majors and courses, and with the help of educational informationization means and platforms, teachers can not only play a leading role in guiding, inspiring and monitoring the teaching process, but also urge students to learn, experience, reflect and construct, fully reflecting on students as the cognitive masters of the learning process.[3] The initiative, and creativity of students can effectively help students achieve the synchronous improvement of knowledge, ability and quality, so as to achieve the best learning effect.

II. THE NECESSITY OF DEVELOPING BLENDED LEARNING MODE IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

College English, as an indispensable course in higher education, has attracted the attention of all university administrators, English educators and students. In 2017, the Ministry of Education of China promulgated the *Guidelines for College English Teaching* to standardize and improve the outcome of College English teaching and learning. However, there are still some problems to be solved in the practice of teaching.

1. Insufficient class hours for teaching. Although everyone acknowledges the importance of College English courses, there still won't "enough" in-class teaching hours for the College English teaching. Considering the characteristics of English language learning, such as, various channels of learning, rich resources and the fact that the in-class teaching does not completely determine the learning outcome, colleges and universities usually arrange in-class teaching hours between 2 and 4 class hours a week. Therefore, how to make better use of the limited in-class hours to improve the students' English learning outcome is a problem that all English educators must tackle.

2. With the further development of teaching methodology, the traditional teaching mode has been proved inadequate to current College English teaching. The research shows that the reasons for learners' poor learning outcome may include the weak English foundation, lack of English learning strategies, insufficient language input, fragmentation of learning time and lack of teachers' guidance. [4] Therefore, it is necessary to improve the course design and find systematic solutions to the relevant challenges.

3. It is necessary to provide learning resources accordingly and Student-Support system for the learners. Although there are a large number of English learning resources on the Internet, these resources are of limited value to learners who lack learning strategies.[5] Therefore, in order to improve the teaching effect of College English course in the Blended Learning mode, the course design must match the construction of learning resources.

III. COLLEGE ENGLISH COURSE DESIGN UNDER THE BLENDED LEARNING MODE

A. Basic Principles of the Course Design

1) It should meet the requirements of the higher education. The course design should embody the national education policy, and the course construction standard should meet the requirements of the *College English Teaching Guidelines* and other documents promulgated by the Ministry of Education.

2) It should conform to the characteristics of education implementation in the new era. It should reflects the positive impact of digital technology and network technology on education, and provide convenience for students to carry out personalized learning.

3) It should conform to the characteristics of learners and solve the problems in the process of learning. Before the course design, detailed analysis should be made for learners. Through the analysis, some common characteristics of College English learners are spotted. For example, most learners are familiar with computer network, mobile applications, online learning platforms, good at information search and can also quickly adapt to the integration of modern technology into the learning process. However, at the same time, many learners lack learning strategies and are not good at making autonomous learning plans. They rely more on the teachers' arrangements and supervision in traditional classroom teaching. Those are the problems that need to be solved when doing the course design.

4) To conform to the regular pattern of English language learning. The course design should embody the mainstream language teaching theories and draw lessons from the existing research results.

B. Course Design under the Blended Learning Mode

College English course design should be systematic, including not only the teaching procedure and the contents design, but also other auxiliary systems.

1) The design of the in-class teaching procedure

It mainly includes the design of the whole teaching process, teaching contents, in-class activities, and pre-class and post-class learning tasks as well. The three sections are coherent and connected. They should be treated like a united circle of English learning.

2) The design of the teaching-learning resources

It includes the design of the teaching and learning resources, such as teaching documents, courseware and other necessary resources needed for teaching and students' self-learning resources, such as the list of learning tasks required for self-learning, micro-lectures, and the test bank. [6]

3) The design of evaluation system

It includes the design of the formative evaluation items, proportion, evaluating criteria and final evaluation items.

4) The design of student support system

Including the design and construction of the Course Learning Platform, Question and Answering system, Peer Coaching Center and the After-Class Activity programs.

C. A Sample of the Course Design

The teaching process is divided into three sections: pre-class, in-class and post-class. In the pre-class section, the students are supposed to complete the tasks assigned by the teachers and note down the questions during the autonomous learning before the class actually begins. Teachers should monitor the students' self-learning process and evaluate the learning outcome, spot the difficulty points aroused in the self-learning section, help students with the questions drown during the autonomous learning, give instructions to the key and difficult points and organize in-class learning tasks. After class, students are supposed to finish the homework according to the teachers' requirements to strengthen the learning effect. Teachers can monitor the students' learning process and effect online, and give feedback. The process can refer to Fig 1.
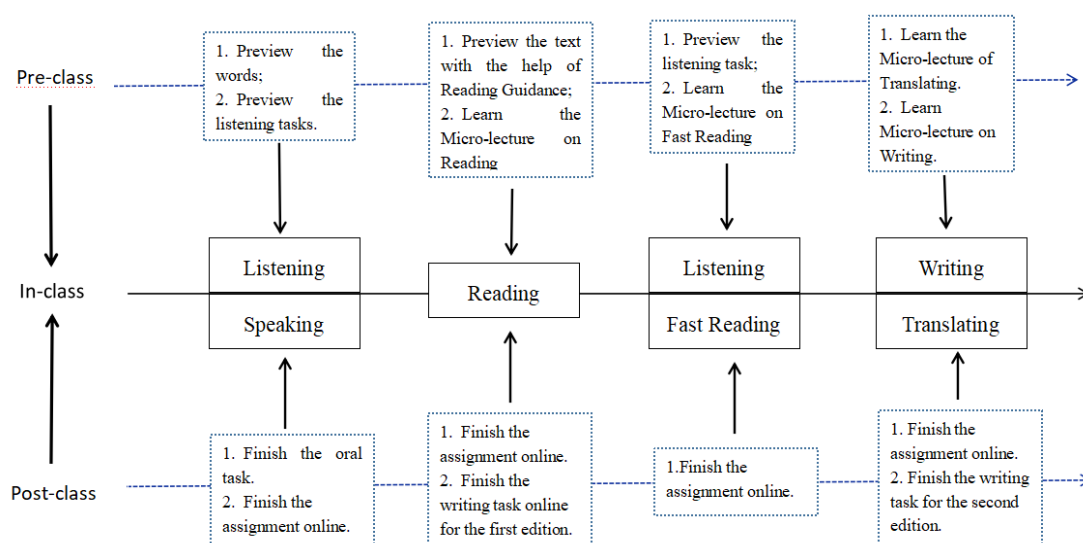

Fig. 1. The course design under the Blended Learning Mode

D. Design of the Evaluation Scheme

The evaluation of the learning outcome is an important part in the whole teaching process, which plays an important role in ensuring the completion of teaching content and the realization of the learning objectives. The Blended Learning mode in College English includes the Online and Offline learning , multiple learning contents and multiple continuous learning processes. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a mufti-dimensional formative evaluation, which includes self-evaluation, teachers' evaluation and student-student mutual evaluation. Formative evaluation pays attention to assessing students' learning process and evaluating their learning achievements at different stages, which overturns the traditional assessment system. [7]Formative evaluation can focus on two channels, which include online evaluation and offline evaluation; two ways, which include the teacher evaluation and student mutual evaluation; two contents which include language knowledge and language skills, 2 objectives which include the learning process and learning effect. The Evaluation Scheme is shown as Fig. 2.

Assessing Items	Score	Tools
Proficiency Assessment	10	Online Testing System
Periodical test 1	10	Online Testing System
Periodical test 2	10	Online Testing System
In-class Performance	10	1. Teacher's evaluation 2. Students mutual evaluation
Autonomous Learning Effect	10	1. Online system record 2. Teacher's in-class evaluation 3. Self-evaluation
Assignment	10	Online and Offline assignment

Fig. 2.   Evaluation Scheme

IV.   CONCLUSION

The Blended Learning mode in College English is a systematic reform project. In addition to the course design, resources construction and evaluation system mentioned in the paper, another most important factor is the participation and continuous input of the English teachers. As a university, it also needs to provide necessary support to guarantee the smooth promotion of the reform. For example, the university administration should perfect the construction of software and hardware environment, implement the construction of course teaching platform, carry out the training of teachers' informationization ability, and implement pertinent incentives for teachers to participate in the Blended Learning reform. Only when all parts of the university systematically promote the relevant work, can the Blended Learning reform carry out smoothly and gradually reveals the effect.

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