

# Reform and Practice of Blending Teaching of "Cross-Cultural Communication" Course for Japanese Majors

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## ABSTRACT

With the popularization of digital networks and the development of information technology, the blending teaching model has been promoted in well-known universities in China and foreign countries. It is a general trend for the blending teaching mode to integrate into the existing university course teaching system. This paper reforms and practices the teaching design and teaching methods of the "Cross-cultural Communication" course for Japanese majors. The blending teaching design of this course is divided into "before class, in class, and after class", relying on the "three links and five steps" teaching model to achieve the teaching purpose of the course, combining the advantages of traditional teaching and digital teaching, and exploring the reform direction and future development trend of the blending teaching of the "Cross-cultural Communication" course for Japanese majors.

**Keywords:** *Blending teaching, Japanese major, Cross-cultural communication.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the popularization of digital networks and the development of information technology, the blending teaching model is favored by education circles in China and foreign countries. According to the survey, universities in the United States, South Korea and other countries have promoted blending teaching, and the campus digitalization in China is also under continuous development and construction. The blending teaching model not only meets the needs of the development of the times, but also is the trend of China's higher education reform, which has important practical significance.

Blending education advocates centering on students' individualized learning and lifelong development, combining traditional classroom's face-to-face learning with students' online independent study. The teaching content is more open and comprehensive, teaching methods are more flexible and diverse, and the teacher-student interaction is deeper and more effective. With the continuous integration of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data technology, it will be more conducive to comprehensively track and analyze the

learning process and effects of students, and realize the intelligent, precise and individualized education. From the perspective of the three most basic elements of educational activities, the blending education is an organic fusion of blending teaching and blending learning. Therefore, the research on the blending teaching mode of the "Cross-cultural Communication" course for Japanese majors has research significance and application value in line with the needs of China's higher education reform.

## 2. APPLICATION PROSPECTS AND FUNCTIONS OF BLENDING TEACHING

### 2.1 Research Status in China and Foreign Countries

At present, some Chinese universities or alliance, such as the Shanghai Sharing Center and the Course Sharing Alliance of Eastern and Western Universities, are focusing on the research and development of high-quality educational resources. The Course Sharing Alliance of Eastern and Western Universities mainly adopts a blending teaching

model. Through the integration and allocation of teachers and resources in several universities, it achieves the maximum distribution of educational resources. In practice, it has also developed a diverse and effective operating mode. Teams of universities such as Tsinghua University have also developed a number of blending teaching model courses on platforms such as XuetangX and Icourses, which have been highly evaluated. Several well-known MOOC platforms in the world, such as Coursera, edX, Udacity, etc., have all moved toward cooperation and alliance to jointly develop courses and share high-quality resources, forming a worldwide learning community. Studies have shown that the blending teaching model is not only widely used in the field of vocational education and training, but also receives "attention from international research institutions" and is widely used in higher education. It "is consistent with the values of traditional higher education institutions, and has the provable potential to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of meaningful learning experiences at the same time", and will become "one of the important trends to promote higher education reform in the next few years". A research report issued by the U.S. Department of Education in 2009 also pointed out that, compared with pure classroom face-to-face teaching and distance online learning, the blending teaching model is the most effective way. On the whole, it is a general trend for the blending education teaching model to integrate into the existing university course teaching system.

## ***2.2 Being in Line with the Reform Trend of Higher Education***

The essence of the blending teaching model is to rethink and redesign the relationship between teaching and learning, and the problem of teaching and learning has always been the most involved field in education reform, and it is also a field that needs to keep pace with the times. The single teacher teaching mode in the traditional teaching mode can no longer adapt to the times. In order to keep pace with the times to be in line with the reform model of higher education, the blending teaching model advocates the teacher-led and student-oriented mode, and emphasizes the initiative and enthusiasm of students in learning. And through the mixing of various teaching methods such as group cooperation, it adopts a variety of methods to cultivate students' ability of innovation and cooperation. At the same time, the development of network information technology will inevitably promote the revolution of education and teaching models, give full play to the

advantages of network information technology, and organically combine offline teaching with online network teaching to maximize teaching effects. This is also the trend of the development of the times and the reform of higher education.

## ***2.3 Effectively Encouraging Students to Conduct Deep Learning***

The core of the reform of the classroom teaching model in universities is to change teachers' teaching style of "cramming education" and give students the initiative of learning. The blending teaching mode emphasizes the teaching mode of "the combination of leading and subject". Traditional classroom teaching is mostly based on simple teaching with the teacher taking the initiative. The role of the teacher is the "knowledge porter", and the main responsibility is the teaching and transmission of knowledge. In the blending teaching model, teachers no longer simply transmit knowledge. On the basis of combining online course learning, the main responsibility of teachers in offline classrooms is organization and guidance, which is to lead students to explore knowledge, cultivate students' critical thinking, and enable students to have the awareness and ability of knowledge inheritance and innovation.

According to Bloom's classification of educational goals, the educational goals in the cognitive domain can be divided into six categories: memory, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. In traditional taught teaching, students have more training in memory and comprehension, but the synthesis and evaluation are not involved, and due to the pressure of the test and the limitation of class time, the analysis and application have not been well exercised. In the blending teaching mode, most of the primary goals such as memory and understanding can be completed in online learning, and students can enter the face-to-face classroom with questions. Teachers cultivate students' application and analysis ability and comprehensive ability by making them complete course projects in groups, and cultivate students' evaluation ability through mutual evaluation among groups. From this perspective, the blending teaching model can effectively promote students' deep learning and achieve higher-level learning goals.

### **3. REFORM AND PRACTICE OF BLENDING TEACHING OF "CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION" COURSE FOR JAPANESE MAJORS**

Blending teaching will surely become the mainstream mode of teaching in the future. Compared with traditional classroom teaching, the blending teaching has strong complexity, uncertainty and nonlinearity characteristics, and has higher requirements for hard and soft environments. The blending teaching reform of the "Cross-cultural Communication" course for Japanese majors aims to integrate online and offline learning, which is the most significant feature of blending learning that differs from traditional classroom teaching methods. In the network environment, it uses computers, tablet computers, smartphones and other tools to guide students to develop individualized and adaptive learning based on learning goals and driving tasks, allowing students to independently determine the learning process, independently select course content, and independently diagnose learning effects. The construction and practice of the blending teaching model will promote students' ability to construct knowledge and solve problems by themselves, which is conducive to the development of the two core qualities of students' independent learning and practical innovation.

#### **3.1 Reform Content**

The teaching scope of the "Cross-cultural Communication" course for Japanese majors includes the basic concepts of intercultural cognition, differences in communication styles, interpersonal relationships and communication, linguistic/non-verbal communication, values, etc. to explain the cross-cultural communication capabilities of China-Japan. When drafting the blending teaching content design of the "Cross-cultural Communication" course for Japanese majors, it's needed to first make a clear and comprehensive positioning of the definition of "culture" in Sino-Japanese cross-cultural communication. On the basis of grasping the full view of the culture, the key issues and application skills in the cross-cultural communication between China and Japan will be the focus of the construction of the blending teaching mode of the course.

The teaching design of the "Cross-cultural Communication" course for Japanese majors is divided into two parts: theory and practice. The blending teaching construction of this course should

combine theory and practical teaching. The theoretical part is the basic concepts of Sino-Japanese cross-cultural communication taught by teachers. In the practical part, students use relevant theoretical knowledge to analyze and solve problems in Sino-Japanese cross-cultural communication.

The theoretical teaching is mainly reflected in the in-class teaching links. In the classroom, teachers clarify the international situation of China and Japan through comparative explanations of Chinese and Japanese cultures, teach the necessity of mutual development between China and Japan in the future, and propose common cultural conflicts in cross-cultural communication. The teaching of the theoretical part requires students to use professional knowledge to analyze problems, find out the root causes of the problems, and formulate methods to solve contradictions.

The practical teaching is mainly reflected in the extracurricular teaching links. First of all, students need to create a case database of Sino-Japanese cross-cultural communication courses, match the topics of independent learning in practical teaching, effectively use the examples in the course case database, use the relevant theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom to discover the problems of cross-cultural conflicts, analyze the causes of conflicts and propose effective solutions. In the process of problem-solving, students find out the similarities and differences between Chinese and Japanese cultures through comparative analysis through independent investigations, group discussions, etc., and recognize their respective strengths and weaknesses, so as to treat problems more objectively and establish a correct world view.

#### **3.2 Implementation Plan**

The blending teaching design of the "Cross-cultural Communication" course for Japanese majors can be divided into three links: "before class-during class-after class" and five steps "individual study-group study-display-evaluation-summary" so as to achieve the teaching purpose of the course with the aid of the "three links and five steps" teaching mode. On the basis of fully explaining the cultural similarities and differences between the two countries, the course guides students to use critical cultural awareness to find and solve problems. The specific design is as follows:

The task-driven teaching method is adopted before class to allow students to learn independently. Teachers publish topics through the network

platform, and students complete investigation tasks in groups as required, and complete independent investigation reports before class for making a speech in class. Students can compile independent survey reports through their own investigation and cognition according to their own understanding of the subject. The teacher analyzes the students' self-inquiry report before class, and adjusts the teaching content in a targeted manner in the following classroom teaching. In the independent study part of students, independent study, independent thinking of topics, and unresolved problems are brought into the group study link. Group study is to use the collective power of a group of students to solve unresolved problems when studying alone, and to stimulate students' enthusiasm for active learning through mutual assistance learning activities.

The teaching design of "flipped classroom" is adopted in the class, allowing students to share and summarize the independent investigation reports of each group in groups, and make a speech and discuss the topic. The "student-oriented and teacher-assisted" teaching form can be adopted, and students should first explore the understanding and cognition of the assigned topics. After the discussion, the teacher will comment and correct errors. In the process of commenting and correcting errors, teachers should be rigorous in words, patiently teach and instruct, and guide students in a step-by-step manner. The display and evaluation in the classroom will realize the cultivation of students' practical ability and evaluation ability through groups' mutual evaluation. Teachers' comments will strengthen the learning effect of students' professional knowledge.

After class, teachers collect students' learning insight in the Sino-Japanese cross-cultural communication courses through after-class feedback, questionnaire surveys, and self-evaluation, so as to reflect on and promote the construction and development of blending teaching in this course. Teachers continue to publish new topics, and students are required to complete relevant surveys and speech preparations based on the new topics. In terms of after-class teaching, teachers can use the course learning platform to publish practical cases related to the subject for students to refer to. In the process of strengthening students' ability to use the knowledge they have learned to solve practical problems, they can consolidate their learning results in the classroom.

### **3.3 Problems to Be Solved**

In the blending learning process in the "MicroMedia" era, there is a relatively free learning atmosphere, there are many resources and diverse information, and students have plenty of time to freely carry out research and group collaborative research activities. However, due to differences in students' enthusiasm, physical and mental maturity and other abilities, their adaptability to the teaching environment in the "MicroMedia" era is also quite different, and there is usually a phenomenon of polarization. Students with strong self-control and adaptability can actively participate in it, and are good at cooperative and inquiring learning mode. However, students with weak self-control and adaptability are accustomed to passive learning, rely more on the traditional teaching of teachers, can't be well integrated into the blending teaching mode, and sometimes fail to keep up with the pace. The implementation of blending teaching requires students to invest more time and energy in course learning than in the past. In particular, the requirements for students' learning initiative are significantly higher than traditional teaching.

To solve the above problems, it's necessary to start with improving students' learning initiative. From the perspective of the organizational form of blending teaching, it has higher requirements of initiative for both teachers and students. On the one hand, as far as teachers are concerned, in addition to the tasks required for traditional teaching, teachers who implement blending teaching also need to complete the production of e-learning resources, the shooting and post-editing of teaching videos, the uploading, updating and maintenance of online teaching platforms, etc. The teaching reform atmosphere, application support and incentive measures of the working environment are the main factors affecting teachers' implementation of blending teaching. And from the survey situation, the guarantee and incentive measures for teachers to implement blending teaching at the school level are powerful means to improve teachers' initiative. Only by improving the initiative of teachers in "blending reform" can students be motivated to participate actively and initiatively. On the other hand, for students, blending teaching requires students to carry out independent learning activities in pre-class preparation and after-class consolidation. It is necessary to optimize the recording and supervision of students' independent learning activities on the online teaching platform, enable students to understand their current course learning situation and

performance trend more intuitively and more timely by promptly publishing the evaluation results of students' online homework and online test results, and stimulate students to learn actively, so as to achieve the purpose of improving students' learning initiative.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The blending teaching reform plan of the "Cross-cultural Communication" course for Japanese majors solves the main problems faced by blending teaching through the "three links and five steps" teaching mode. It is expected to stimulate students' active learning enthusiasm through independent learning and group learning before class; the display and evaluation links in the class cultivate the students' ability to discover and solve problems, and to practice application skills; through the after-class summary, integration and feedback links, the teaching purpose of consolidating the knowledge points in the class can be realized.

This paper innovates the teaching mode and teaching methods of the "Cross-cultural Communication" course for Japanese majors, combines the advantages of traditional teaching and digital teaching, and explores the reform direction and future development trend of the blending teaching of "Cross-cultural Communication" course for Japanese majors. The blending teaching design of the course aims at stimulating students' interest in learning, focusing on cultivating students' learning initiative. Flexible and diverse teaching methods will break the traditional teaching mode of "deciding everything by one man's say" in the classroom by teachers. The "flipped classroom" teaching design can fully mobilize students' enthusiasm, inspire students' thinking, and maximize their desire for knowledge and learning initiative. The research feature of this paper is to optimize the theoretical teaching and practical teaching links based on the existing courses, highlight the cultivation of students' cross-cultural communication skills, and aim to improve students' cross-cultural communication skills. It combines the theoretical teaching part with the practical teaching part in the "Cross-cultural Communication" course for Japanese majors, and through the blending teaching design of the course, students can understand their current course learning situation and performance trend more intuitively and timely, and teachers can stimulate students to learn actively, so as to achieve the purpose of improving students' learning initiative.

#### **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

This paper is independently completed by Wanlong Zhu.

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