



Discussion On Blended Teaching of Theoretical Foundation Courses in Economics

- Take International Economics (bilingual course) as an example

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Abstract. Taking the problems encountered in the classroom teaching of the "International Economics" (bilingual) course and the construction of the open curriculum as an example, this paper analyses the problems in the blended teaching of "International Economics" from the aspects of the target group of the course construction, the decomposition of knowledge points, to the preparation of lectures and PPTs and online operation, and explores the blended teaching of the theoretical foundation course of economics.

Keywords: blended teaching, theoretical foundation courses, open course

1 Introduction

At the "New Era National Conference on Undergraduate Education in Higher Education Institutions", the Ministry of Education proposed that the "Internet" has given birth to a new type of educational productivity, breaking the boundaries of traditional education and school walls, and triggering revolutionary changes in educational and teaching models. China has increased the openness of the MOOC platform and promoted the open sharing of high-quality teaching resources. Subsequently, the Ministry of Education has been established The Guidance Committee on Teaching Informatization and Teaching Method Innovation "provides guidance on open courses and teaching method innovation." China Education Modernization 2035 "proposes to accelerate educational reform in the information age, promote the transformation and innovation of educational organizational forms, and promote educational modernization through information technology.

Under the "Internet +" education environment, teachers are no longer the only source of students' knowledge. The network resources are rich, but the information is fragmentation and lacks systematicness; Course learning provides a gathering point for massive amounts of content, which is aggregated and provided to students. And learning knowledge points online and answering questions offline internalizes and integrates knowledge. Under the "Internet plus education" mode, students carry out "self-study -

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mutual learning - group learning". The online and offline hybrid teaching method helps to solve the problem of education imbalance (Xu Xiaofei,2023),^[1] and promote the high-quality development of China's higher education.

2 The Application of Blended Teaching Method in the Theoretical Foundation Courses of Economics

2.1 Problems in classroom teaching of theoretical foundations of economics

The basic theoretical courses of economic disciplines, such as Western Economics and International Economics, are the core professional basic courses of economics and management in colleges and universities stipulated by the Ministry of Education, and play a very important role in the teaching of professional courses of economics and management. Many teachers, such as, Li Zinai (2010), Jiang Aiying and Cui Yana (2013) have explored the problems and reform directions in classroom teaching of theoretical foundation courses.^[2-3] From the teaching content to the teaching conditions, to the teaching methods and means, all have become the focus of the discussion of teaching reform. The teaching methods have evolved from the debate teaching to the problem oriented teaching methods, and the Case method. The core goal is to integrate students closely into classroom teaching, so as to achieve the purpose of mastering knowledge.

2.2 Blended teaching method is the trend of classroom teaching reform

The biggest bottleneck encountered in the exploration of teaching reform is that students' time is limited. Whether it is problem oriented or case analysis, students need to spend more after-school time serving classroom teaching; More and more classroom teaching reforms will continuously squeeze students' spare time, greatly reducing the effectiveness of teaching reforms. At the same time, in the era of information technology, classroom teaching has encountered greater challenges, namely the impact of smartphones on students in the classroom. Integrating information technology teaching tools into classroom teaching has become an important direction of teaching reform for economic theoretical foundation courses (Li Ruiqin,2022,2023;Wang Binxin,2022).^[4-5] This paper will take international economics (Bilingual) as an example to analyze the ideas and problems of mixed teaching reform.

3 Offline Classroom Teaching and Online Open Course Construction of *International Economics* (Bilingual)

3.1 Current situation of offline classroom teaching of *International Economics* (bilingual)

Since 2001, the School of Economics of SDTBU has offered the Chinese course of International Economics, a professional basic course, to all economics majors in the university. By 2007, in response to the call of the Ministry of Education to offer

bilingual courses and cultivate bilingual talents, majors such as International Economics and Trade, Economics, International Business, and Finance attempted to transition from Chinese language teaching to bilingual teaching. Since 2007, through more than a decade of continuous learning and exploration, a stable and high-level teaching team has gradually formed. Bilingual course teaching was first carried out in international economics and trade, finance, economics, and finance majors. Later, it underwent the establishment of new majors, the division of majors, and the cancellation of majors. The number of teachers and majors fluctuated continuously, and according to the curriculum statistics released by the Academic Affairs Office, a total of about 10000 people were taught.

In order to ensure the quality of bilingual teaching, we should adhere to the use of the original textbook or an adaptation of the original textbook (the national planning textbook for the 11th Five Year Plan), and constantly improve the syllabus, lesson plans, and problem sets. Among them, the International Economics (bilingual) syllabus has won the second prize in the school's syllabus competition, And the school level teaching reform project "Research on the improvement of teaching methods of bilingual course international economics" was presided over and relevant teaching and research papers around this topic was published. In order to adapt to the development of the international economic situation, consolidate basic knowledge, and improve students' analytical and thinking abilities, each semester's course group updates the problem set based on the latest international trade and investment situations, and reflects it in each semester's lesson plan. At the same time, the course group conducts two to three teaching discussions and reflections every semester to improve the teaching quality of the course.

The current curriculum design approach is to draw a knowledge map and use diagrams to organize the course content from six different levels: "Course- Part- Chapter-Section-Compound Knowledge Points -Basic Knowledge Points". The logical arrangement of a book to students through diagrams, and each chapter uses a hierarchical structure of tree and simple mesh, or a complex mesh structure composed of several independent tree structure to represent the relationship between knowledge points, giving students an intuitive presentation. In the presentation of the courseware, in order to reduce preview time and learning barriers, each chapter first introduces keywords and phrases; reasonably handles the proportion of Chinese and English in the main text explanation, with a ratio of 7:3 between English and Chinese, and adds Chinese explanations for difficult points. After class learning, volunteer to form small groups, preview and review in groups are encouraged to reduce the inertia caused by learning difficulties.

However, classroom teaching is still a laborious teacher with complete teaching materials, traditional teaching methods, and students who are constantly distracted, resulting in unsatisfactory teaching results. Many students, after studying for a semester, still do not know what they are learning. Through surveys, it has been found that they have learned sporadic knowledge points but cannot master the curriculum system. With the popularization of information technology, WeChat, Weibo, QQ, and others have become effective auxiliary means for "successfully completing a class" and "extending

the classroom". Course team members have made good use of these modern technologies and are able to answer students' questions in a timely manner.

3.2 Construction of online open courses of *International Economics* (bilingual)

3.2.1 Construction of international economics (bilingual) open course in China.

According to the requirements of the "Implementation Plan for the Construction of Online Open Courses in Colleges and Universities in Shandong Province" focusing on the construction of high-level applied majors in our school, and promoting the development and sharing of high-quality teaching resources, the "international economics" (bilingual) course passed the selection in 2018, and became the first batch of online open courses constructed by our school.

On the search pages of MOOC, coursera, edX, Ewand, MOOC Academy, Xuetao Online and other well-known MOOC websites, after inputting international economics, courses such as Economics, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, International Trade and International Finance appear most frequently. Whether teaching in Chinese or bilingual, there is no open course with the name of international economics on major websites at present. This raises two questions. First, why have universities not built international economics as an open course? Second, without experience for reference, how should we build an online open course of international economics (bilingual)?

3.2.2 Construction ideas of international economics (bilingual) open course.

The professional basic course of international economics after Western Economics, which is more theoretical, mostly uses the analytical tools of Western Economics. In addition, bilingual teaching poses a great challenge to teachers and students. By utilizing online open courses to solve the problems in classroom teaching, we can start from the following aspects.

Firstly, clarify the course positioning. There is a significant difference in the audience of open course construction between China and the United States, with the former offering courses to 90% of college students. The audience of international economics (bilingual) is undoubtedly college students, and students majoring in economic management are the main target group. Next, considering the difficulty of course construction, is it targeted at the top 20% or the middle 60% of classroom teaching, and should we balance the inert 20%? This involves the teacher's educational philosophy, that is, whether the teacher adheres to the principle of "not abandoning, not giving up" or the law of the jungle of "survival of the fittest" in the process of students' knowledge acquisition.

Secondly, break down the course into 30 knowledge points, with each knowledge point narrated for no more than 10 minutes. The 30 knowledge points are independent and in line with the theoretical logic of the course; Each chapter has a summary and induction, while mastering each knowledge point, understanding its position and role in the course. Among the 30 knowledge points, 80% are basic knowledge, taking care of 80% of students who need to master basic knowledge; 20% of the advanced content

is recommended by the teacher, along with books, articles, and the latest subject trends, to meet the needs of students who have more than enough time to expand after class.

Thirdly, prepare courseware and lecture notes. This is the core part of the construction of open courses, and it is also the difficulty of the construction of open courses. The problem of "what to say and how to say" needs to be solved, while the international economics (bilingual) course is also faced with the problem of what language to speak. Through continuous debugging by the course team, the original plan for 70% English and 30% Chinese has been adjusted to 100% English teaching with Chinese subtitles, and key knowledge in the PPT has been marked with pop-up windows. The construction method of all English has increased the workload of bilingual course construction. On the basis of completing the English PPT and English lecture notes, the teachers of the course team have translated their own lecture notes into Chinese, which is equivalent to doing one thing twice. After three months of hard work on continuous revision and adjustment, the courseware and lecture notes were finally completed.

Fourthly, course recording. Course recording is the process of objectifying intangible labor in the early stage, where teachers present their preparation work in a three-dimensional manner from courseware and sound. The biggest challenge during the production process is that teachers generally lack a sense of camera, which reduces the ease of imparting knowledge. Due to the lack of resonance, the pauses in the classroom and the time left for students to think, known as white space, are no longer present in video production. As a result, videos lack the vividness and infectivity of classroom teaching, which determines that online course video learning cannot independently achieve course learning objectives.

Fifth, online sharing. At present, international economics of our school has completed. The supporting teaching syllabus, teaching plan, problem set, and service team are in operation. Because it is the first batch of construction courses, we will learn from the experience of teaching induction through trial and error, in order to improve the quality of teaching.

Sixth, it will be launched eight times and approved as a first-class undergraduate course in Shandong Province (2021) and a national first-class undergraduate course (2023). Until the spring semester of 2023, over 10000 students from more than a dozen universities have participated in MOOC learning. ^[6]

3.3 International economics (bilingual) online and offline hybrid teaching mode

According to the problems of offline teaching of International Economics (bilingual) and the actual situation of online construction, the hybrid teaching method of online and offline combination is helpful to solve the problems in course teaching. At present, the teaching hours of bilingual courses in our school are 48 hours, and the curriculum arrangement is adjusted to the mixed mode of 16 (online)+32 (offline).

Firstly, the organization of course teaching, whether online or offline, is carried out in the form of learning groups. As a professional basic course, international economics (bilingual) is usually offered in the third semester. sophomores have just finished learning western economics and started to learn their major courses. They lack professional

thinking and professional English vocabulary, so they must complete the preparation for the course through preview. Each group of three students will reduce the workload of preview and complete the warm-up of learning tasks through preview communication. Online learning identifies learning tasks, key and difficult points, and evaluates the effectiveness of self-learning. At the same time, it opens up discussion areas and is completed in small groups to reduce the difficulty of course learning, break the learning silence, and leave learning traces.

Secondly, online learning students set up a framework, while offline classroom teaching teachers fill in contents, forming a link of "framework + knowledge", providing the possibility of "flipping the classroom". In the form of flipped classroom, whether it is student lecturer evaluation or student evaluation, as well as classroom discussion, it is necessary to have a preliminary understanding of knowledge and learn to express ideas in professional language. In classroom teaching, we will discuss the practical application of trade policies, specifically the differences between tariffs and non tariffs. The concept and types of tariffs and non tariffs are the framework, and the specific content involves the analysis of welfare effects, including consumer effects, producer effects, and government revenue and expenditure effects, which are knowledge. The teacher will explain the welfare effects of tariffs, and the welfare effects of different types of non-tariff barriers will be completed by students. Students will give evaluations and summarize the differences between the two. The after-school question is to analyse the reasons why a country adopts different trade policies and the effectiveness of trade policies in achieving its trade goals, based on the Sino US trade disputes.

Thirdly, after classroom teaching, online resources help consolidate knowledge. According to the analysis of classroom teaching effectiveness, over 80% of students are passive learners, meaning that the teacher ends their learning immediately after speaking, without asking questions or asking questions about things they don't understand. The immediacy of classroom teaching increases the difficulty of classroom learning. And online resources and discussion traces from online students can help students who have doubts in classroom learning review and browse, and solve learning problems. Online resources can be reused, solving the problem of not being able to save classroom teaching; And classroom teaching has made up for the rigidity of video resources, timely enriching and updating the latest resources, effectively combining the two, and successfully completing the learning of a class.

Online courses are materialized services, materialized services are the result of tempering, reuse, which can consolidate classroom teaching, and add extensionality and connotation on the basis of classroom teaching. Offline teaching can be updated at any time to make up for the shortcomings of materialized services. Online and offline are independent and complementary, mixed in use to enhance students' learning ability and improve teaching quality.

4 Reflections on the Blended Teaching of Theoretical Foundations in Economics

In the context of "Internet +", rather than taking the network and smart phones as challenges to classroom teaching, we should incorporate them into our classroom teaching to make up for the shortcomings of our traditional teaching. Therefore, hybrid teaching is the general direction of our theoretical curriculum construction. On the basis of the exploration of hybrid teaching in international economics (bilingual), this paper further reflects on the hybrid teaching of theoretical basic courses in economic discipline.

Firstly, are the basic theoretical courses of latecomer universities self built or borrowed. 2013 is known as the first year of MOOC construction in China. Universities such as Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Zhejiang University have already taken the lead in the construction of open courses. Considering the construction costs and benefits, the courses that are first included in the construction system are usually basic courses. It is a difficult question whether later developed universities should build their own courses or draw on the relatively mature open courses of other universities. Considering the differences between students from general undergraduate colleges and students from 211 and 985 colleges, course team members can compare the difficulty level of existing course resources, adjust the construction ideas of our school based on its applicability.

Secondly, the decomposition of knowledge points should maintain the integrity of the curriculum system. The difficulty of studying theoretical courses lies in the difference between the use of subject language in the course and ordinary oral expression, which creates psychological distance for students towards theoretical learning. The completeness of the theoretical system in the theoretical foundation course helps students to master the overall discipline. If the decomposition of knowledge points destroys the theoretical curriculum system, fragmented knowledge points are not conducive to the cultivation of students' subject thinking.

Thirdly, the allocation of online and offline class hours is the core of blended learning. If time cannot be effectively allocated, students' knowledge preparation may be incomplete, which may be detrimental to the progress of classroom teaching; If too much time is allocated to online learning, it will squeeze out offline learning time, and teachers will not be able to effectively answer students' learning questions, reducing their mastery of the entire course learning situation. How to ensure the effectiveness of online learning is an important challenge in the construction of open courses. A detailed and reasonable guidance plan is necessary; Publishing in advance on the platform and giving students the corresponding amount of advance is a time guarantee.

Fourthly, a scientific and comprehensive assessment method is an important part of measuring blended learning. Assessment not only includes result assessment, but also process assessment. From the assessment of the online learning process to the completion of homework after class, classroom discussion performance, classroom quizzes, and the final comprehensive exam at the end of the semester, the assessment composition will be refined and clearly marked, so that students can have evidence to check and the assessment results are transparent and credible.

5 Conclusion

Under the background of "Internet +", with the help of modern information technology and under the guidance of teachers, students active learning to solve problems in the teaching process of basic courses of economic theory through hybrid teaching methods, so as to achieve the goal of improving teaching quality, which has become the development trend of college education reform.

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