Research on Blending Teaching of College English Based on Superstar Learning App

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Abstract

With the support of new information technology, the blending teaching of college English flipped classroom based on network platform subverts the traditional classroom structure and brings us refreshing ideas of teaching reform. As a new classroom teaching mode and organization form, the college English flipped classroom blending teaching mode based on superstar learning app provides new ideas and inspiration for educational reform. This new type of blending teaching provides new ideas for our English teaching reform. This paper analyzes the feasibility of applying the blending teaching mode based on flipped classroom in college English teaching, and constructs a blending teaching mode based on students’ independent learning to improve students’ autonomous learning ability and teaching quality. The results of this study verify the validity hypothesis of the blending teaching mode of college English flipped classroom based on superstar learning app in English teaching from both theoretical and practical aspects. Blending learning is just an attempt for English teaching, there is much room for improvements.

Keywords

Superstar learning app, flipped classroom, English, blending teaching

Nowadays, faced with students’ weak English foundation and limited classroom time, it is difficult to meet the needs of interaction between teachers and students and interaction among students, which is necessary for English teaching, so as to teach English as knowledge rather than skills. This phenomenon fundamentally deviates from the basic norms of language teaching. Therefore, how to improve the current college English teaching methods and improve students’ ability to use language in practice is the top priority of our foreign language teaching.

As a new classroom teaching mode and organization form, the college English flipped classroom blending teaching mode based on superstar learning app provides new ideas and inspiration for educational reform (Bergmami, J. & Sams, A, 2011). This new type of blending teaching provides new ideas for our English teaching reform. Therefore, it is of great significance to carry out the blending teaching of college English flipped classroom based on superstar learning app (Harvey Singh & Chris Reed, 2003).

1. Constructivism

Constructivism believes that knowledge is not acquired through teachers, but by learners using necessary learning materials with the help of others (including teachers and learning partners) in a certain context, that is, social-cultural background, and by means of meaning construction. The teaching design of constructivism is divided into two parts: one is the design of environment and the other is the design of learning strategies. In fact, the design of the environment
requires providing a good learning environment conducive to students’ independent construction of knowledge, such as creating situations related to learning subjects, providing necessary information resources and organizing cooperative learning (the external cause of learning). On the other hand, because constructivism is the “independent construction” of learners, it requires learners to have a high degree of initiative and enthusiasm. To mobilize students’ enthusiasm depends on the design of some autonomous learning strategies, including support, anchor, heuristic, self-feedback and other strategies (internal causes of learning). Constructivism emphasizes the independent construction, inquiry and development of learners, and requires the combination of such independent learning with problem-solving-based research learning and scenario-based cooperative learning, which is especially beneficial to the development of learners’ innovative consciousness, innovative thinking and innovation ability. The leading role of teachers is not only the explanation of knowledge content, the inspiration and guidance of students, but also the creation of situations, the provision of information resources, the organization of cooperative learning, the guidance of research learning and the design of independent learning strategies. Constructivism is an important theoretical basis of blending teaching. Under the blending teaching mode of college English based on superstar learning app, it emphasizes students’ independent learning before class and cooperative classroom learning. Students are the main body of learning, and teachers are the helpers and promoters of students’ learning. Before class, students carry out independent learning by preparing micro videos, PPT, word documents, etc., and in class, under the guidance of teachers, obtain knowledge internalization and sublimation through mutual discussion among students (Weiwei Qin, 2018).

2. Research design

This study is mainly designed to prove the hypothesis of the validity of the blending teaching model of college English flipped classroom based on superstar learning app in English teaching. This study lasted for one year, and the textbook adopted is the first new edition of college English.

2.1 Hypothesis

Null hypothesis: The blending teaching based on network platform is not effective in college English teaching.

Hypothesis 1: The blending teaching of college English flipped classroom based on superstar learning app is very effective in college English teaching. The performance of the experimental class students is much higher than that of the control class students, which can improve and promote college English teaching.

2.2 Subjects

204 students (with equal English level) are selected from Eight parallel classes in grade 2021; 102 students for each of the two classes. One class adopts blending college English based on superstar learning app; the other class adopts traditional conventional English teaching. From the table below, p=0.538>p=0.005, the difference in English level between the two groups is not significant.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 1. The Difference in English Level between the Two Groups</th>
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2.3 Control of experimental variables and irrelevant factors

Independent variable: For the experimental group, the independent variable is the blending teaching mode of college English flipped classroom based on superstar learning app, while for the control group, the independent variable of the experiment is the original school teaching mode.

Dependent variable: the national CET 4 is used as the pre-test and posttest. These two tests can provide reliable and effective data for students’ progress in English learning. For the experimental and control groups, the dependent variable was the CET 4 scores of both classes.

2.4 Experimental tools or methods

In order to make the experiment as objective and convincing as possible, the experiment was carried out by means of tests, questionnaires and interviews.
2.4.1 Test
Both pre-tests and post-tests questions are the CET 4 real questions set by the National Test Center. The paper is divided into four parts: writing, listening, reading comprehension, and translation.

At the beginning of the first semester, all the subjects took the unified English proficiency test for the National College English Test level 4 in June 2022.

At the end of the second semester, the end of the experiment, all the subjects took the national CET-4 in December 2022. This score is the post-test score of this experiment. The purpose is to test whether the students have met the basic requirements after a semester of study.

Both pre-tests and post-tests are comprehensive English proficiency tests, which can provide reliable and effective data for students’ progress in English learning.

2.4.2 Questionnaire survey
The whole research process lasted for two semesters, and the questionnaire was conducted at the beginning of the first semester and the end of the second semester. The questionnaire includes the basic information of students, such as their online learning time, their views and attitudes on online learning, and their learning activities using the Internet, etc. The aim mainly for the experimental class is to understand the situation of students after blending learning and the use of learners’ meta-cognitive strategies.

2.4.3 Interview
The students of the experimental class for a semester can be interviewed during the break, mainly understanding their attitude towards the new model, the problems and suggestions in the study. Through the interview, the unsatisfactory part of the new model can be gradually improved.

2.4.4 The implementation of blending learning mode in English teaching
According to the above model, combined with the reality of the teaching process of the new version of College English, we elaborate on the implementation of the model in teaching.

(1) Preliminary analysis
The teaching of each unit of the first edition is very similar. We will take the knowledge points as an example to conduct content analysis. For example, memorizing and application of words and grammar, reading comprehension and writing require understanding and application, listening and speaking dialogue ability requires skilled application; words and grammar can be completed through network self-study, article understanding and composition teaching face to face, listening and speaking dialogue ability needs the combination of two teaching methods (Jeremy, 2000).

(2) Design of network teaching resources and teaching strategies
a. Design of network teaching resources. Blending learning is an organic combination of traditional teaching and network teaching, so it is necessary to build network resources in teaching. This course not only considers the reality of network learning, but also considers the situation of teachers’ face-to-face teaching. Its design and development mainly take the following three principles into account.

First, a modular design is adopted. There are great similarities in the teaching of each unit, each unit is broadly divided into a Warming up, Section A, Section B, Horizon Broadening, After-class Tasks Five Parts, the teaching in the Section A is mainly the text understanding, notes to the text, words and expression, idea sharing, writing et al. For each module, with different teaching strategies, students’ online self-study, warming up can have a general understanding of the course. Idea sharing requires a report through group collaboration, so as to brainstorm knowledge sharing in a wider scope. The adoption of module design is not only conducive to students’ learning, but also conducive to teachers’ teaching and later maintenance and expansion of network curriculum.

Second, different knowledge content is performed in different media. According to the analysis of the knowledge content, in the network teaching we can use more rich media to show the teaching content, we can mainly present courseware, for vocabulary, annotation, grammar etc., video, audio streaming courseware, for language teaching, exercise students’ listening and speaking ability, and the creation of authentic English learning environment, operation practice courseware, used to test students’ mastery of vocabulary and stimulate students’ interest in learning vocabulary. In English teaching, video and audio courseware is the most common.

Third, we need to support independent learning. Because the blending teaching mode should face students’ self-study, but also face the classroom teaching, so in the process of design to promote students’ self-study through effective design strategy, the course is designed with learning content support (courseware, video, etc.), learning interactive support, interactive support, navigation support, evaluation feedback support, etc.

b. Design of blending teaching strategies. Common blending teaching strategies mainly include five thematic-based
blending teaching, problem-based blending teaching, task-based blending teaching, case-based blending teaching, and research-based blending teaching. According to the actual teaching, New College English mainly adopts the teaching mode based on topics and problems, and each teaching unit involves one subject. In online self-study, students can use topic-based blending learning strategies to improve their learning efficiency, teachers adopt the problem-based teaching strategy and improve the speed and quality of teaching.

c. Implementation of blending teaching mode. Since the implementation of the new version of College English, the main teaching methods are face-to-face multimedia teaching, network learning and listening and speaking ability training practice. The teaching process of the experimental class includes two parts: one is face-to-face classroom teaching, and the other is network learning (Ma Xiulin, 2018).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Questionnaire survey

According to the questionnaire survey, most of the students in the experimental group agreed with the blending teaching mode of flipped classroom in college English based on super star learning app. They believed that this mode helped to improve the initiative and consciousness of English learning, enhance the awareness of participation, and have a significant effect on improving English performance.

The main purpose of Q1-15 is to understand student attitudes towards online learning. The results show that the vast majority of students have a positive attitude to online learning, which provides flexible and diverse learning forms, rich and practical learning content, stimulate their interest; 50% think that because of the teachers directly participate in online learning forum and personal website, which enhances the friendly relationship between teachers and students. Q16-30 aims to understand the learning effects generated by online learning. Many students have given a positive evaluation to the new teaching model, they think that they benefit from online learning, their listening, speaking, reading and writing ability has been significantly improved.

3.2 Results of the relationship between meta-cognitive strategies and improving students’ autonomous learning in blending learning

The application of any teaching mode is inseparable from learning strategies, and the blending teaching mode based on super star learning app is no exception. Being good at and make full use of learning strategies makes English learning achieve twice the result with half the effort. Learning strategies are special behaviors used by learners to help them understand learning and retain new information, which include cognitive, meta-cognitive, memory, compensation, emotional, and social strategies. In the same student questionnaire, 40 percent chose “very few”, 28.6 percent were “ok”, and 0.7 percent were “better”. In the individual interviews with the students, we also learned that some students did not know what the learning strategies were, and what the learning strategies included. Even if certain strategies are used, there is a lack of purposeful and conscious use. Results on foreign language teaching suggest that differences in English learning strategies have a decisive impact on performance when other conditions are identical. Since the learning strategy has such a significant impact on the students’ performance, we have formulated a more specific training plan after understanding the situation. The training plan is divided into two steps: First, introduce learning strategies through lectures. Second, integrate strategy training into classroom teaching to transition students from knowing what a learning strategy is and understanding how to use learning strategies. Only when students consciously regulate and choose to use learning strategies, students’ learning efficiency can be improved. Students’ mastery and application of learning strategies is the guarantee of the effective completion of blending learning tasks (Wang Xiaodong, 2019).

In order to help learners to have strong self-control over their learning, learners are first trained in meta-cognitive strategies. After training, learners have more awareness of self-learning, and they can use meta-cognitive strategies to adjust their learning.

| Table 2. Learners’ autonomous learning and their meta-cognitive strategies |
|--------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|               | N     | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
| VAR000001     | 102   | 46.00   | 103.00  | 70.7183| 10.20038      |
| VAR000002     | 102   | 15.00   | 57.00   | 47.1479| 8.33853       |

Notes: VAR000001= learner autonomous learning; VAR000002= learner metacognitive strategy
The above table shows high standard deviation values for both learners’ autonomous learning and their meta-cognitive strategies, respectively 10.20038 and 8.33853, suggesting that learners have different attitudes towards autonomous learning and different meta-cognitive strategies.

| Table 3. Correlation of meta-cognitive strategies and autonomous learning |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| VAR00001 Pearson Correlation | 1                           | .600**                      |
| Sig.(2-tailed)               | .                           | .000                       |
| N                            | 102                         | 102                        |
| VAR00002 Pearson Correlation | .600                       | 1                          |
| Sig.(2-tailed)               | .000                       | .                          |
| N                            | 102                         | 102                        |

Notes: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The above table shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient of meta-cognitive strategies and autonomous learning is 0.600, which means that the correlation of these two variables is significant, that is, learners with high autonomous learning ability are good at using meta-cognitive strategies, and learners who also are unsuccessful in autonomous learning rarely use learning strategies. Efficient autonomous learners always specify appropriate goals, know how to effectively schedule learning time, and regularly evaluate their learning for timely feedback (Ying Xiaoyan & Wu Xingyang, 2018).

4. Conclusion and Implication

The results of this study support and verify the validity hypothesis of the blending teaching mode of college English flipped classroom based on superstar learning app in English teaching from both theoretical and practical aspects. Blending learning is just an attempt for English teaching, whether it is the concept of teachers and students, or the learning plan and implementation, there is much room for improvements. In the future research, how the teachers monitor the implementation of the blending teaching mode in the college English teaching will be our future research direction.

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References


