

Practice and Exploration of Blended Teaching Mode for Cross-Border E-Commerce Based on Digital Technology

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Abstract: Taking the course Cross-Border E-Commerce for Business English majors at Yangtze University College of Arts and Sciences as an example and adopting project-based teaching as the theoretical foundation, this study implements online-offline blended teaching centered on the product-release project with two digital platforms, namely Zhongyu Wisdom Platform and Yixue Cloud Platform, and constructs a diversified formative evaluation system. Teaching practice indicates that blended teaching supported by digital platforms can integrate language training with cross-border e-commerce practical operations. Students obtain satisfactory overall learning outcomes, and their professional practical capabilities and teamwork competence are effectively improved. This research can offer references for the teaching reform of similar courses.

Keywords: Educational digitalization; Project-based teaching; Cross-Border E-Commerce; Blended teaching

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1. Background

Driven by rapid advances in artificial intelligence, big data and other technologies, educational digitalization has become a vital development trend in education.

Against this background, traditional cross-border e-commerce teaching in some application-oriented undergraduate universities fails to keep pace with the times and is confronted with various practical problems. Firstly, classroom teaching still adopts the traditional multimedia-based mode. Digital resources merely serve as supplementary teaching materials or after-class assignments without giving full play to their value in empowering business knowledge acquisition and practical teaching. Secondly, teachers tend to apply relatively single teaching methods. They have not fully explored how digital technologies can maximize the benefits of blended cross-border e-commerce teaching under pedagogical guidance. Thirdly, course evaluation is unitary, focusing only on textbook exercises while ignoring students' practical performance and teamwork competence, which makes it hard to assess students' real proficiency comprehensively.

Generally speaking, current teaching practice needs to address insufficient integration between technology and instruction as well as a lack of theoretical guidance. It is urgent to build a teaching paradigm featuring deep integration between digital technologies and teaching content supported by sound theories. Taking Cross-Border E-Commerce, a core course for Business English majors from the School of Foreign Languages at Yangtze University College of Arts and Sciences, as the research object, this paper takes Project-based Teaching (PBT) as the theoretical framework. It explores the blended teaching mode for cross-border e-commerce based on digital practical-teaching platforms and evaluates teaching effects, so as to provide references for cross-border e-commerce teaching practice.

2. Introduction

2.1. Introduction to the course

Cross-Border E-Commerce is a core course for Business English majors. Blended teaching is delivered via the Zhongyu Wisdom Cross-Border E-Commerce English Teaching Platform (hereinafter referred to as Zhongyu Wisdom Platform) and Yixue Cloud Platform. It covers basic operations of cross-border e-commerce, platform manipulation, market product selection, cross-border e-commerce logistics, cross-border e-commerce payment, marketing, cross-border e-commerce data analysis, customer service, and other themes. The course lasts 16 weeks with 2 class hours per week, including 10 online class hours and 22 offline class hours.

2.2. Introduction to the platform

Zhongyu Wisdom Platform is practical teaching software designed to help students master professional cross-border e-commerce knowledge, develop solid English listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating skills and conduct business communication. Drawing on real-world cases from cross-border e-commerce platforms and independent websites, it enables students to practice various cross-border e-commerce modes from multiple dimensions, including cross-border e-commerce terminology, business correspondence, social-media promotion, cross-border marketing, and operational services. Students can master operational procedures and professional knowledge of each link and improve their linguistic competence and business skills for cross-border e-commerce operations.

Yixue Cloud Platform is practical teaching software that cultivates students' practical skills in cross-border e-commerce, store operation, and platform manipulation, enabling them to complete full-range cross-border business activities. Based on simulated business scenarios of mainstream cross-border e-commerce platforms and real-world store-operation cases, it provides practical training for diverse cross-border e-commerce business scenarios covering product-selection analysis, category setting, product listing, order processing, store promotion, and customer service. Students can acquire complete cross-border e-commerce operational workflows and practical skills for each procedure, and enhance their hands-on capabilities and post-related comprehensive qualities for cross-border e-commerce operations.

3. Teaching design

Project-based teaching is a systematic pedagogical approach guided by teachers, centered on students, mediated by projects, targeted at vocational competence and rooted in real-world social contexts ^[1]. It

has five standard characteristics. The first is centrality. Students learn core disciplinary concepts through projects. The second is driving force. Teaching projects are usually triggered by driving questions. The third is constructivism. Project activities involve students' knowledge construction or the acquisition of new skills. The fourth is autonomy. Students conduct independent research, design, presentation, and evaluation in project implementation. The last is reality, that is to say, project-based teaching focuses on authentic real-world issues rather than virtual ones ^[2]. Accordingly, this paper adopts project-based teaching as the theoretical framework and takes product release as an example to explore blended cross-border e-commerce teaching practice and its effects supported by digital platforms.

3.1. Defining teaching projects

3.1.1. Project theme

The project centers on product release on cross-border platforms. Divided into groups, students conduct market research for product selection, excavate and screen keywords, polish English titles and product descriptions on the Zhongyu Wisdom Platform, sort out various product attribute information, and finally complete a simulated product listing on the Yixue Cloud simulation platform so as to deliver complete project outputs for cross-border product release.

3.1.2. Three-dimensional teaching objectives

Knowledge objectives: Master basic logic for cross-border e-commerce product selection; be familiar with rules for constructing cross-border titles, keyword-screening methods and writing standards for English product descriptions; grasp operational procedures for product release on Yixue Cloud Platform; understand compliance requirements for product listing on cross-border platforms.

Competence objectives: Conduct basic cross-border market research and keyword mining; write authentic and compliant English product titles and descriptions with Zhongyu Wisdom Platform; complete category matching, attribute editing, and simulated product listing on Yixue Cloud Platform, and optimize product copies based on feedback.

Quality objectives: Establish awareness of compliant cross-border e-commerce operation; improve group-work division and collaboration capabilities; develop market-oriented thinking for product operation.

3.1.3. Forming project groups and implementation plans

Students are divided into groups of four. Each group jointly draws up a project implementation plan and clarifies time nodes for research, copywriting and revision, platform listing and output polishing. Teachers review project proposals and put forward revision suggestions for unreasonable product-selection orientations and market positioning.

3.2. The implementation of project

An online-offline blended teaching mode is adopted: pre-class online pre-training is completed on both platforms; project tasks are tackled offline in-class sessions; project review is carried out after class.

At the pre-class online stage, students log into Zhongyu Wisdom Platform to study high-quality sample cross-border products embedded in the platform, finish market research and keyword collection, and draft and repeatedly polish English titles and product descriptions. Meanwhile, they access the Yixue Cloud Platform to get familiar with the background of simulated cross-border stores, learn procedures for category

selection, attribute filling, and image configuration, and learn platform release rules. Teachers monitor students' practical-training progress via the background of both platforms, summarize common problems in copywriting and platform operation, and identify key and difficult points for offline classroom teaching.

Offline in-class sessions focus on project breakthroughs. Teachers give targeted lectures on common problems identified in online training, such as keyword stuffing, ill-structured product descriptions, unnatural English expressions, and wrong category selection. Each group transfers finalized English titles and product descriptions polished on the Zhongyu Wisdom Platform to the Yixue Cloud simulation platform to finish category matching, product-attribute input, and copy configuration for simulated product-listing practice. Teachers provide on-site guidance. On the one hand, they guide students to further optimize the expression of product selling points. On the other hand, they correct operational errors and interpret violation risks on cross-border platforms. After completing the first round of simulated listing, groups conduct mutual evaluation to identify defects in copies and platform settings and make revisions on the spot.

In the after-class review, group members review practical-training records on both platforms and reflect on deficiencies of the product-release project. They further optimize English product copies on Zhongyu Wisdom Platform, update revisions synchronously to Yixue Cloud Platform, and re-complete simulated listing to realize secondary project iteration. Students are encouraged to carry out extended training for new product categories to achieve knowledge and skill transfer.

3.3. The presentation of project

After the implementation of the project, the presentations are organized. Each group delivers project presentations, with deliverables including product-selection research reports, keyword-analysis reports, finalized English titles and descriptions from Zhongyu Wisdom Platform, screenshots of simulated product-listing pages on Yixue Cloud Platform, and project review reports. Group representatives elaborate on product-selection ideas, copy-design logics, key operational points for platform listing, as well as problems encountered and optimization measures adopted in project implementation. Other groups observe, learn, and raise questions for exchanges.

3.4. Project evaluation

A diversified assessment system combining formative evaluation, project-achievement evaluation, self-evaluation and peer evaluation is constructed. Formative assessment accounts for 50 % of the total score. Data are extracted from the background of the Zhongyu Wisdom Platform and the Yixue Cloud Platform, including copy-revision frequency, completion of keyword tasks, practical-training operation records, and task-submission progress, together with individual participation within groups. Project-achievement assessment takes up 35 %, scored comprehensively according to research-report quality, English product-copy proficiency, completeness of product release on Yixue Cloud Platform, and depth of review reports. Self-evaluation and group peer evaluation account for 15 %. Students summarize personal gains from the project while group members evaluate each other's task contribution and teamwork performance. Teachers give centralized comments on all project outputs and sort out common problems in product-release posts to consolidate teaching outcomes.

4. Analysis of practical effects of blended-teaching

4.1. Analysis of effects of Zhongyu Wisdom Platform

This study collects course-learning data of 56 Business-English majors through the Zhongyu Wisdom Platform and conducts learning-situation analysis from three dimensions: formative evaluation, summative evaluation, and teacher scoring, so as to objectively reflect students' learning behaviors and comprehensive learning outcomes in online practical courses.

In terms of overall scores, the average score of the 56 students reaches 81.35, indicating favorable overall class-level learning performance.

In formative evaluation, students obtain relatively high scores in learning duration and learning quantity, and perform well in learning quality. This demonstrates that most students take the initiative to learn platform resources, complete sufficient practical-training tasks, and produce high-quality assignments. Satisfactory scores in learning attitude and learning progress show that students can generally follow course schedules, possess sound self-directed-learning awareness, and maintain stable online-learning status.

In summative evaluation, course progress and course learning achieve excellent results, and students gain desirable scores in examinations and teaching tasks. This proves that students can finish course quizzes and cross-border e-commerce practical-training projects, basically meeting professional-competence cultivation objectives set by the course. Teacher scoring incorporates offline performance such as class participation and group-project practice, further improving the comprehensive course-evaluation system.

4.2. Analysis of effects of Yixue Cloud Platform

In Cross-Border E-Commerce teaching, Yixue Cloud Platform serves as a virtual-simulation practical-training carrier and complements Zhongyu Wisdom Platform. Supported by simulated cross-border business scenarios, modular practical-training tasks, and multi-dimensional data statistics, it realizes effective integration of theoretical knowledge and hands-on training. According to class-level learning-situation data, the overall comprehensive scores of most students exceed 75 points, which proves that the Yixue Cloud Platform achieves desirable practical-teaching effects.

From the perspective of project implementation, Yixue Cloud Platform covers complete business workflows including cross-border store construction, product listing, marketing promotion, and order processing, offering students a highly-simulated practical environment for cross-border e-commerce. Students finish a series of practical-training tasks such as product-selection analysis, cross-border copywriting, and store operation on the platform. They convert theoretical knowledge of business English and cross-border operation into practical capabilities, effectively remedying the drawback of traditional teaching that prioritizes theory over practice. Most students can complete each practical-training module by the teaching deadlines with satisfactory task quality. Their understanding of business workflows for cross-border e-commerce posts is strengthened, and their comprehensive competence in language output and business practice is fully cultivated.

5. Conclusion and implications

Based on Project-based Learning (PBL), this study constructs an online-offline blended teaching mode for Business English. Through project formulation, implementation, assessment, and evaluation, it realizes in-depth integration of linguistic skills, cross-cultural communicative competence, and business knowledge.

Research findings show that platform-supported blended teaching can not only boost students' learning interest and quality, but also enhance their linguistic proficiency and business practical capabilities.

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Disclosure statement

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