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A Study on the Application of Blended Learning in College English Classrooms

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Abstract:

With the rapid development of educational technology, the teaching model of college English is transitioning from traditional single-classroom instruction to a blended learning approach. This paper explores the background, practical pathways, and impact of this shift on student learning outcomes. The blended learning model combines the flexibility of online learning with the interactivity of face-to-face teaching, reconstructing the teaching process of college English classrooms through methods such as flipped classrooms, task-based teaching, and the integration of online resources. Research indicates that this transformation not only enhances students' comprehensive English abilities but also cultivates their self-directed learning skills and digital literacy. However, the shift in teaching models also faces numerous challenges, such as improving teachers' technological proficiency, students' adaptability to online learning, and the effective integration of teaching resources. By analyzing specific teaching cases, this paper summarizes the advantages and limitations of the blended learning model in college English teaching and proposes optimization strategies, aiming to provide theoretical support and practical references for advancing college English teaching reform.

Keywords:

College English teaching, Blending learning, Teaching Reformation

1.Introduction

With the rapid development of society, educational reforms are also evolving in tandem. The swift advancement of educational technology has profoundly impacted teaching models in language education, particularly in the context of college English instruction. Traditional teaching methods, which predominantly rely on a single mode of face-to-face instruction, are increasingly being challenged by the need for more flexible, interactive, and spatio-temporally unrestricted approaches that place students at the center of learning. To transform these traditional teaching models, blended learning has emerged as a significant and innovative pedagogical approach.

This paper focuses on students at different academic levels, such as undergraduate and non-English major students in vocational colleges, to explore the transformation of college English teaching models. It emphasizes the application of strategies such as flipped classrooms, project-based blended learning, and collaborative learning. By integrating artificial intelligence and digital tools with traditional methods, blended

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learning aims to enhance students' language proficiency, foster self-directed learning, and improve overall engagement. However, this transition also presents challenges, including the need for teacher training, student adaptation, and effective resource integration. Through an analysis of current practices and case studies, this study seeks to explore the potential of blended learning in college English teaching and provide practical recommendations for its successful implementation.

2.The Theoretical Framework of Blended Teaching Mode.

Blended Learning is an instructional model that combines traditional face-to-face teaching with online learning [1]. By integrating the strengths of both teaching environments, it aims to optimize the allocation of teaching resources and enhance students' learning experiences and outcomes. Blended Learning is not merely a simple combination of online learning and classroom teaching; rather, it achieves an organic fusion of the two through carefully designed teaching strategies.

On the basis of Garrison and Vaughan (2008), the core of Blended Learning lies in "the thoughtful integration of face-to-face and online learning activities to create a more flexible and effective learning experience." This model emphasizes active student participation and the design of personalized learning pathways during the learning process [2]. According to the Graham (2006), emphasized that “blended learning is not merely a simple combination of online learning and classroom teaching, but rather an organic integration achieved through carefully designed instructional strategies.”

Blended learning can divide into different models. Such as Flipped Classrooms, Rotation Model, Flex Model, Self- Blend Models, Project-Based Blended Learning, Blended Micro- Learning, in this essay, Flipped Classroom and Project- Based Blended Learning as the key patterns for non-English major college students as the research object in Tianfu College of SWUFE in this essay.

2.1. Flipped Classrooms Mode

The flipped classroom is a prominent form of blended learning, characterized by the "flipping" of the traditional classroom structure: students independently learn new knowledge through online videos, reading materials, and other resources before class, while class time is dedicated to discussions, exercises, and problem-solving. This model was first introduced by American educators Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams to address the issue of students falling behind due to absenteeism.

2.1.1 Background and Origin

Due to the technology gets better and faster, more and more traditional classrooms mode have to change into different patterns, adopting the international development tendency.

The background of the Flipped Classroom date back to the early 2000s, when the education field was facing challenges such as inefficiencies in traditional teaching models, lack of student engagement, and new opportunities created by rapid advances in technology. The traditional classroom model is mainly taught by teachers and passive acceptance of knowledge by students, resulting in low utilization of classroom time and difficulty in meeting students' personalized learning needs [3]. At the same time, the popularization of infor-

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mation technology has provided the possibility for the innovation of education model, especially the rise of video recording and online learning platform, which has laid the foundation for the implementation of flipped classroom.

About the proposal of flipped classroom, the concept of flipped classroom was first proposed by Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams, two chemistry teachers at Woodland Park High School in Colorado, USA. In 2007, to solve the problem of students falling behind because of absences, they began to record videos of lectures and upload them to the Internet for students to watch at home. This practice not only helps absent students keep up, but also unexpectedly improves the efficiency of classroom time use [3]. Bergmann and Sams found that moving the teaching of the basics before class freed up more classroom time for interaction and practice. This "flipped" teaching structure has gradually evolved into a systematic teaching model and has been promoted worldwide. Their book Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day, published in 2012, details the concept and practice of flipped classrooms, further promoting the popularity of this model. About early practice and development.

Based on the practice of Bergmann and Sams, flipped classroom has been gradually applied to different disciplines and education stages. For example, the "Peer Instruction" proposed by Eric Mazur, professor of physics at Harvard University, coincides with the concept of flipped classroom, emphasizing that classroom time should be mainly used for interaction and discussion among students [4]. In addition, Salman Khan, the founder of Khan Academy, provided rich resource support for the promotion of flipped classroom by producing a large number of free online teaching videos [5].

2.1.2 Developments and Changes

Back to new patterns of classrooms in 21st century, the rapid development of information technology has provided important support for the innovation of educational models. Here's how technology is driving the rise of flipped classrooms:

Popularization of video recording and communication technology: With the rise of video platforms such as YouTube, teachers can easily record and share teaching videos to provide students with high-quality pre-class learning resources [5].

Maturity of online learning platforms: The popularity of learning management systems (LMS) such as Moodle and Blackboard has provided technical support for the implementation of flipped classroom, enabling teachers to better manage learning resources and track student learning progress [6].

The popularity of mobile devices: The popularity of smartphones and tablets enables students to access online learning resources anytime and anywhere, facilitating pre-class learning in flipped classrooms [2].

2.2. Project-Based Blended Learning

Project-Based Blended Learning (PBBL) is a teaching model that combines Project-Based Learning (PBL) with Blended Learning. Through the organic combination of online learning platform and face-to-face teaching, it takes project as the core, guides students to solve complex problems in real situations, and cultivates their comprehensive ability and practical skills [8].

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2.2.1 Background and origin

As a student-centered teaching method, Project-Based Learning (PBL) can be traced back to the progressive education movement of American educator John Dewey in the early 20th century. Dewey emphasizes "Learning by Doing" and holds that education should cultivate students' thinking ability and problem-solving ability through practical activities [7]. Since then, PBL has gradually been applied to different education stages and disciplines and has become an important teaching method. The rise of project-based blended learning is closely related to the reflection of traditional teaching mode and the promotion of technology development in the field of education. Traditional teaching mode is mainly taught by teachers, and students passively accept knowledge, which is difficult to cultivate their comprehensive ability and practical skills [8]. At the same time, the demand for talents has shifted from the mastery of simple knowledge to the cultivation of comprehensive abilities such as critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork [2]. In addition, the rapid development of information technology provides technical support for the innovation of education models, making it possible to combine online learning with face-to-face teaching [1].

2.2.2 Developments

Due to technology develop rapidly, during 21st century in second class classrooms, more and more schools using this pattern in the not only high school English classrooms environments, but also college English classes. For example, project-based blended learning has realized the innovation of the mode under the technology enabling. The application of technologies such as online learning platforms, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence (AI) provides students with an immersive learning experience and personalized learning support. The integration of technical means not only optimizes the allocation of learning resources, but also enhances the practical and interactive nature of the project.

About Practical application and field expansion area, project-based blended learning was initially applied mainly to K-12 education, but in recent years it has gradually expanded to higher education, vocational education, and corporate training. Its practice forms include interdisciplinary projects, school-enterprise cooperation projects, and research projects based on social issues. This diversified application scenario reflects the extensive adaptability and practical value of project-based blended learning.

3.Application of Flipped Classrooms for undergraduate students in College English Classrooms.

The Flipped Classroom as mentioned above, is an innovative model that is flipped based on the reorganization of time allocation and learning processes in traditional classrooms. In this model, students' complete knowledge input through self-learning before class, usually with the help of micro-lesson videos, reading materials or online resources recorded by teachers. Classroom time is mainly used for teacher-student interaction, group discussion, problem solving and practical application to promote the internalization and deepening of knowledge. The core concept of flipped classroom is to put "knowledge transfer" in the first place, and "knowledge internalization" in the classroom, so as to maximize the learning efficiency of class time. This model emphasizes the active learning of students and the guiding role of teachers, and aims to cultivate

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learners' ability of independent learning, critical thinking, and collaboration. The successful implementation of flipped classroom depends on well-designed teaching resources, effective technical support, and the transformation of teachers' roles, which is one of the important practices in contemporary education reform. In one word, the Flipped Classroom is a method of learning that "flipped" traditional classes, with students learning independently before classes and devoting class time to interaction, discussion, and practice.

For Tianfu College of SWUFE, freshmen and sophomore students are allowed to learn two types of English courses, also called general major courses, including College English and English Listening & Speaking Training, both undergraduate and junior students all need to attend these two courses compulsorily.

3.1. Flipped Classrooms in real teaching case

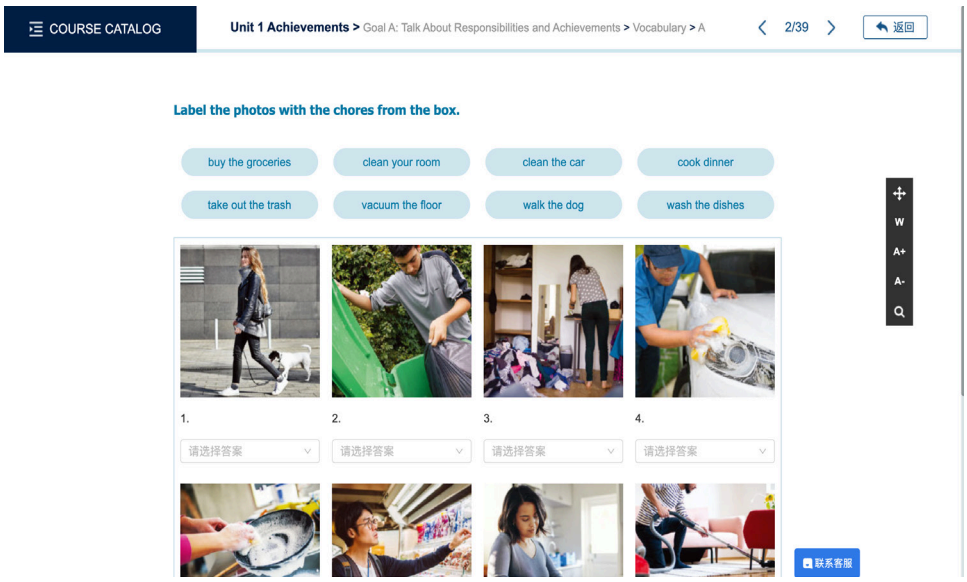
Let's put Tianfu College of SWUFE as an example, the target subject is non-English learners from the first year -classroom students and sophomore students, they're majoring in accounting are required to take foundational English courses, Overall, the English proficiency of undergraduate students in this program is characterized by a basic grasp of grammar, a vocabulary range of approximately 3,000 words, and relatively weak oral communication skills.

According to this condition above, during the College English courses, firstly:

Pre-Class Knowledge Input:

Video Micro-Lectures: Teachers record short instructional videos (typically 5-15 minutes) for students to watch before class to grasp foundational knowledge. The video content should focus on core concepts, accompanied by clear explanations and visual aids.

Reading Materials: Provide reading materials related to the course topics (such as textbook chapters, academic articles, case studies, etc.) to help students expand their knowledge. For example, in Tianfu College students of SWUFE, freshmen students are allowed to sign up an website namehttps://www.tsinghuaelt.com , students need to read materials by themselves before attend to the class.



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This screenshot above can shows how to apply Flipped Classrooms into real English Listening & Speaking Training course.

Online Quizzes: Use online quizzes or questionnaires to assess students' understanding of the pre-class materials and provide feedback to teachers, enabling adjustments to classroom activities. For instance, as Tianfu College of SWUFE students, all students have their own personal ID to access the Official edu Website to engage in learning activities. It named “Chaoxing”

Those tools can adopt into different classes teams in the same levels of Tianfu College students of SWUFE, most of courses needs to do some quiz, and teachers supposed to upload syllabus, lesson plan and courseware on the site.

3.2. Advantages and shortcomings.

For the advantages, it can enhance learning autonomy. Flipped classroom requires students to study independently through video micro-lessons and reading materials before class, which helps to cultivate the independent learning ability and time management ability of freshmen and sophomores and lays a foundation for follow-up study. Secondly, enhance classroom interaction, classroom time is devoted to discussion, practice and problem solving, and students can be more actively engaged and interactive, enhancing the depth and breadth of learning. Third, Personalized learning support, teachers can provide targeted guidance based on students' pre-class learning data (such as online test results) to meet different students' learning needs.

Meanwhile, it can increase interest in learning, through diversified teaching resources and interactive forms, flipped classroom can stimulate students' interest in learning, especially for non-English majors, and alleviate the boredom of language learning. Lastly, cultivate comprehensive ability, by focusing on problem solving and teamwork, flipped classrooms help students develop critical thinking, communication and practical skills.

4. Application of Project-Based for undergraduate students in College English Classrooms.

Project-Based Blended Learning (PBBL) mentioned above already, is an educational model that combines traditional face-to-face teaching with online learning, with its core focus on promoting students' application of knowledge, problem-solving, and development of higher-order thinking skills through project-driven learning activities in authentic contexts. This model emphasizes that students, under the guidance of teachers, utilize digital tools and resources to independently or collaboratively complete challenging project tasks, while engaging in knowledge acquisition, discussion, and feedback through online platforms, thereby achieving personalized and deep learning. Research indicates that project-based blended learning can effectively enhance students' motivation, collaboration skills, and problem-solving abilities [9]. Furthermore, by integrating online and offline resources, this model optimizes teaching efficiency and provides students with more flexible learning pathways [10]. Therefore, project-based blended learning is regarded as a significant teaching strategy that meets the demands of modern education.

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4.1. Project-Based Blended learning in real teaching case

Project -based Blended learning including different patterns, such as Task-Based Learning, generally, is the key patterns during the Chinese educational system.

Task-Based Learning (TBL) is one of the core methodologies in Project-Based Blended Learning (PBBL). Teachers design real-world tasks based on course objectives, and students acquire knowledge and skills by completing these tasks. For example, in an English class, teachers can design a project task such as "simulating an international conference," requiring students to work in groups to prepare and deliver English presentations. This approach can stimulate students' interest in learning while fostering their language application skills and teamwork abilities [11].

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning emphasizes students working together in groups to complete project tasks. In project-based blended learning, teachers divide students into groups and assign specific project goals to each group. For example, in an "English Culture Presentation" project, students can divide tasks among themselves, with some responsible for research, others for creating PowerPoint slides, and others for delivering the presentation. This method not only enhances students' language skills but also cultivates their teamwork and communication abilities [12].

Let’s take a look a real case in Tianfu College English Classroom, for first-year non-English major students in a vocational college, such as those in Accounting Class 01, the overall English proficiency tends to be weak, with significant issues in grammar and an inability to express themselves fluently in spoken English. Additionally, classroom discipline is poor, and students lack self-motivation in learning. Therefore, the primary teaching objectives are to enhance students' enthusiasm and self-discipline while making classroom instruction more engaging. Introducing project-based blended learning into vocational-level classes is highly necessary. For example, in a college English course, one component of the overall grade could be a group presentation. It’s also called “Collaborative learning”. Students in each group would select an English topic appropriate to their level, brainstorm ideas, create a PowerPoint presentation, and deliver a speech to the entire class. The performance of each group would then be evaluated and scored accordingly.

This approach not only encourages active participation and collaboration among students but also provides a practical and interactive way to improve their English skills. By integrating project-based tasks with blended learning methods, students can develop both their language abilities and essential soft skills, such as group presentation and public speaking, in a more engaging and motivating environment.

At the same time, in terms of platform utilization, more than half an hour of each class is allocated to students. Key exercises for the college-to-university entrance exam are uploaded to the teaching platform,“Chaoxing”, requiring students to complete these exercises with quality within the specified time. Additionally, teachers frequently upload instructional videos, supplementary reading materials, and practice questions. Students are expected to study and reflect on these resources independently, engaging in deep learning, also known as "extended learning," on the platform. This project-based blended learning approach is more practical and suitable for junior college students.

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4.2. Advantages and shortcomings.

Enhancing Learning Motivation and Engagement

Project-based blended learning can stimulate students' interest and intrinsic motivation through real-world project tasks. For first-year vocational college students majoring in non-English fields, project tasks can be aligned with their professional background or future career needs, making learning more practical and engaging [12].

Developing Comprehensive Skills

While completing projects, students not only apply professional knowledge but also develop comprehensive skills such as teamwork, time management, problem-solving, and information technology application. These skills are particularly important for the career development of non-English major students [10].

Personalized Learning Pathways

Blended learning combines online and offline resources, allowing students to flexibly choose learning content and time based on their progress and needs. This is especially beneficial for first-year students with varying academic foundations, helping them achieve personalized improvement in English learning [13].

Increasing Language Practice Opportunities

Through project tasks, students can use English for communication, discussion, and presentation in authentic contexts, thereby enhancing their language application skills. For example, students can collaborate in groups to complete English reports or presentations, improving their speaking and writing abilities[14].

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For **shortcomings**, generally speaking, here have 4 aspects,

High Demand for Student Self-Discipline

Blended learning requires students to have strong self-directed learning and time management skills. For first-year vocational college students, especially those who have not yet fully developed study habits, a lack of self-discipline may negatively impact learning outcomes [15].

Technical Barriers

Project-based blended learning relies on digital tools and platforms, and some students may face difficulties due to unfamiliarity with technical operations. Particularly for students with lower English proficiency, using an entirely English-language online platform may increase their learning burden [16].

Complexity in Project Design and Implementation

Teachers need to carefully design project tasks to ensure they are appropriately challenging and aligned with learning objectives. For non-English major students, project content must strike a balance between language difficulty and professional relevance, placing high demands on teachers' instructional design capabilities [8].

Potential Issues in Group Collaboration

Project-based learning often requires students to complete tasks in groups. However, in practice, issues such as uneven task distribution, poor communication, or over-reliance on certain group members may arise, affecting learning outcomes [17].

All in all, Project-based blended learning offers significant advantages in enhancing the learning motivation, comprehensive skills, and language practice opportunities of first-year vocational college non-English major students. However, its successful implementation depends on students' self-discipline, technical support, and teachers' instructional design capabilities. In practice, teachers need to provide necessary guidance and support tailored to students' characteristics to maximize the advantages and address the limitations.

5 Conclusions

In general, whether it is the application of project-based learning or the flipped classroom in college English courses, it is essential to first analyze the diversity and individuality of students as a foundation. Different research subjects require different teaching approaches, models, and instructional designs to meet the needs of students at various levels in learning college public English. A good teacher must continuously improve their teaching methods to keep up with the demands of the times, designing classroom content that aligns with contemporary needs and ultimately enhancing students' English performance. Project-Based Blended Learning and flipped classroom and AI technology Trends provides a more efficient, flexible, and intelligent teaching mode for college English teaching, need to transform traditional classrooms into diverse classroom modes, it also conforms to the trend of The Times of digital and intelligent education, and lays a solid foundation for cultivating students with comprehensive language ability and innovative thinking.

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