Construction and Evaluation of a Blended Teaching Model for College English Reading Based on Project-Based Learning

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Abstract: *This study constructs and evaluates a blended teaching model for college English reading based on project-based learning. By analyzing the theoretical foundations for integrating project-based learning with blended teaching models within the constructivist framework, the study systematically develops a teaching model centered around driving questions, with seamless connections between online and offline activities, and elaborates on its structural components and implementation procedures. Simultaneously, it designs a multi-dimensional assessment framework covering reading proficiency development, collaborative inquiry effectiveness, higher-order thinking skills, and learning engagement, establishing a data-driven mechanism for teaching improvement. This model effectively integrates teaching resources, promotes the synergistic development of students' academic English reading literacy and comprehensive competencies, and provides a new pathway for the reform of college English teaching.*

Keywords: *project-based learning; blended teaching model; college English reading; teaching construction; assessment framework*

Introduction

College English reading instruction plays a pivotal role in cultivating students' academic competencies and intercultural communication skills. However, traditional teaching models exhibit limitations in stimulating students' intrinsic motivation, and in integrating language skills with critical thinking abilities. Project-based learning facilitates students' knowledge construction and competency development through sustained inquiry within authentic contexts, while the blended teaching model expands learning dimensions and provides personalized support through the systematic restructuring of online and offline environments. The integration of these two approaches offers a promising solution to address these challenges. Grounded in constructivist theory, this study systematically explores the intrinsic connections between project-based learning and blended teaching, develops a tailored teaching model for college English reading, and establishes a scientific evaluation framework. This research holds significant theoretical value and practical necessity for deepening the reform of college English teaching and enhancing the quality of talent cultivation.

1. Theoretical Integration Foundation of Project-Based Learning and Blended Teaching Model

1.1 Core Concepts and Educational Value of Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning is a student-centered teaching methodology, whose core lies in guiding learners to participate in a challenging and authentic long-term inquiry project, through which they actively construct knowledge, develop skills, and form a deep understanding. This concept emphasizes the integrity of learning activities; a complete project typically starts with a driving question, runs through a continuous inquiry process, and ends with the presentation of a tangible public outcome. In this process, students' autonomous decision-making, teamwork, and reflective revision are regarded as key components.

For college English reading instruction, the educational value of project-based learning is reflected in its transformation of isolated reading skill training into a purposeful and contextualized meaning-construction activity. Students no longer passively decode text information; instead, to

achieve project goals — such as producing a cross-cultural product analysis report or planning an international conference proposal—they actively search, critically read, synthesize, and apply multiple English texts. This transformation effectively promotes the synergistic development of language proficiency, critical thinking, and complex problem-solving skills.

1.2 The Connotation and Development Context of Blended Teaching Model

The blended teaching model is not a simple superposition of online learning and offline teaching, but rather a design that systematically restructures and optimizes teaching elements. Its connotation lies in organically integrating the advantages of face-to-face classroom interaction with the flexibility and resource richness of online learning, aiming to create a deeply engaging and highly personalized learning experience for students with different cognitive styles and learning paces. The development context of this model is closely related to the evolution of educational technology and the deepening of learning theories. Early forms focused on moving some learning materials to online platforms as a supplement to classroom teaching[1]. With the deepening understanding of constructivist learning theories and the maturation of technologies such as learning management systems, the focus of the blended teaching model has gradually shifted to redesigning the activity processes of teaching and learning, emphasizing the functional complementarity and seamless connection between online and offline components, in order to achieve effective extension of teaching time and space, and ultimately enhance the overall effectiveness of teaching.

1.3 Feasibility Analysis and Synergistic Effects of Their Integration

Project-based learning and the blended teaching model exhibit a high degree of intrinsic consistency in their theoretical foundations and objectives, which provides a solid basis for their deep integration. Both approaches are fundamentally grounded in constructivist learning theory and share an emphasis on authentic learning contexts, active knowledge construction by learners, and social interaction. In terms of feasibility, the blended teaching model offers an ideal operational platform and resource support for implementing project-based learning. Its online components can efficiently support the storage and distribution of project resources, facilitate asynchronous collaboration and communication among teams outside class hours, and provide space for displaying and archiving process-oriented outcomes. Consequently, the offline classroom is liberated from the heavy burden of knowledge transmission, allowing it to focus on guiding higher-order thinking during project progression, facilitating in-depth team collaboration, and providing personalized feedback and scaffolding.

The integration of these two approaches can generate significant synergistic effects. The structured environment of the blended teaching model provides a management framework for the complex processes of project-based learning, ensuring the orderly progression and operational feasibility of project inquiry. Conversely, project-based learning injects soul and core driving force into the blended teaching model by integrating various online and offline learning activities into a coherent and challenging task context, thereby endowing every learning activity with clear purpose and holistic meaning. This integration enables college English reading instruction to transcend the temporal and spatial constraints of traditional classrooms, forming a learning ecosystem that uses projects as the main thread, simultaneously advances through online and offline channels, and supports more intensive sustained inquiry and collaboration[2].

1.4 Generation of the Theoretical Framework for College English Reading Instruction

Based on the above analysis, a theoretical framework guiding the construction of a blended teaching model for college English reading can be established. This framework employs project-based learning as the overarching logic and core driving force for instructional design, while utilizing the blended teaching model as the concrete pathway and operational environment for achieving project-based learning objectives. The core composition of the framework comprises three interrelated elements: the driving question serves as the starting point, which should originate from academic or quasi-professional contexts and stimulate students' intrinsic motivation to seek solutions through reading English materials; the blended activity process functions as the carrier, where online components focus on individual knowledge input, preliminary inquiry, and asynchronous collaboration, while offline sessions concentrate on collaborative deepening, strategic guidance, and outcome refinement, together forming a closed loop; the diversified outcome orientation constitutes the goal, emphasizing equal importance on both the learning process and final outputs, with particular attention

paid to students' depth of information processing, critical thinking levels, and comprehensive language application abilities demonstrated in complex reading tasks. This theoretical framework ensures the advanced nature of the teaching model in concept and its feasibility in practice, establishing clear guiding principles for the specific construction work in the following chapter.

2. Systematic Construction of the Blended Teaching Model for College English Reading

2.1 Overarching Principles and Teaching Objectives of Model Construction

The construction of this blended teaching model adheres to a set of interrelated core principles. The student-centered principle serves as the cornerstone of the entire model, requiring that instructional design consistently prioritizes activating student agency. This is achieved by creating authentic learning contexts and challenging tasks that transform students into active constructors of knowledge rather than passive recipients[3]. The goal-oriented principle emphasizes translating macro-level course objectives into project-driven questions and specific phased tasks, ensuring every learning activity has a clear competency focus. The systemic principle focuses on the functional positioning and organic integration of online and offline learning spaces, striving to build a cohesive teaching environment where components are interconnected and mutually supportive. The adaptive principle endows the model with necessary flexibility, enabling dynamic adjustments according to different text types, thematic complexity, and students' existing language proficiency levels, thereby achieving differentiated instructional support.

Guided by these principles, the teaching model establishes multi-layered instructional objectives. Its core objective is to comprehensively enhance students' academic English reading literacy, which is specifically manifested as the ability to deconstruct complex English texts. This includes efficient information retrieval and filtering skills, deep critical analysis capabilities, and cross-textual information synthesis and reconstruction abilities. Simultaneously, the model emphasizes developing students' team communication and collaboration skills through project-based cooperation, enabling them to learn negotiation, division of labor, and integration in collaborative inquiry. Particularly importantly, the model aims to systematically cultivate students' higher-order thinking skills. Through sustained project-based inquiry in authentic problem contexts, it trains their problem-identification, analytical reasoning, and innovative problem-solving capabilities.

2.2 Project-Based Blended Teaching Structural Elements

The structure of this teaching model is formed through the systematic integration of four interdependent key elements. Project design serves as the core and starting point of the entire structure, whose quality directly determines the depth and breadth of learning. A well-designed project should revolve around an open and cognitively challenging driving question, which must originate from authentic academic or professional contexts, naturally elicit the need for in-depth processing of a series of complex English texts, and clearly define the tangible final product requiring public presentation along with its evaluation criteria.

The resources and platform element constitutes the physical and technological foundation for the model's operation. This element includes not only a learning management system integrating course management, content distribution, and discussion functions, but also encompasses online document tools supporting real-time collaboration, digital resource libraries providing authoritative academic language materials, and thematic reading material packages customized according to project themes. The integration of these resources and tools builds a stable, rich, and easily accessible technological environment for the smooth implementation of projects.

The activity sequence element represents the pathway planning connecting the learning starting point and endpoint. It systematically designs a complete learning cycle, progressing from project initiation and context introduction, to related knowledge construction and skill preparation, then to group collaborative inquiry and solution formation, further to outcome creation and iterative refinement, and finally to public presentation and collective reflection.

The assessment mechanism element permeates the entire learning process, adopting a combination of formative and summative assessment methods to conduct multidimensional, continuous evaluation and feedback on students' participation quality, collaboration effectiveness, phased outputs, and final outcomes[4].

2.3 Teaching Activity Flow Integrating Online and Offline Components

The implementation of teaching activities follows a meticulously designed operational mechanism that operates on parallel online and offline tracks. The online learning space primarily assumes the functions of knowledge transmission, personalized inquiry, and asynchronous collaboration. In this environment, students independently receive and analyze project tasks, utilize core resources provided by the instructor along with supplementary links for targeted reading and information integration, and conduct preliminary idea exchange, resource sharing, and task coordination through tools such as online forums and collaborative documents, thereby laying the foundation for in-depth offline interaction.

The function of the offline physical classroom has undergone a fundamental transformation, evolving from a traditional knowledge delivery venue into a center for competency development and thinking training. Face-to-face classroom time is primarily dedicated to addressing higher-order cognitive challenges encountered during project advancement, such as organizing in-depth discussions on complex textual structures, conducting targeted reading strategy workshops, diagnosing and intervening in group collaboration dynamics, and facilitating refined peer review and polishing of phased outcomes.

Online and offline components do not represent two isolated phases but rather form a tightly coupled iterative cycle. Preliminary outcomes from online asynchronous inquiry provide materials and focus for offline in-depth discussions, while new insights and strategies generated during offline interactions in turn guide the next round of online asynchronous collaboration and deeper learning. This cyclical process continuously propels project inquiry toward higher levels of development.

2.4 Teacher-Student Roles and Interactive Relationships in Teaching Implementation

In the implementation process of this model, the roles and mutual relationships between teachers and students undergo a fundamental redefinition. The teacher's role transforms from that of a traditional knowledge authority and unilateral transmitter to a designer of learning ecosystems, a guide in the project inquiry process, and a curator of learning resources. Their core responsibilities involve constructing intellectually challenging project scenarios, scientifically planning and systematically organizing integrated sequences of online and offline learning activities, providing timely and necessary scaffolded support at critical junctures of student inquiry, and guiding students in metacognitive reflection through continuous formative feedback to monitor and adjust their own learning progress.

Correspondingly, students' roles also shift from being passive information recipients and isolated learners to becoming active autonomous investigators, contributors within collaborative teams, and co-constructors of knowledge. They are required to assume primary responsibility for their learning progress, proactively plan and manage individual and team learning tasks, construct understanding through dialogue, debate, and negotiation during collaboration, and creatively apply acquired knowledge to solve practical problems within the project. Consequently, the interactive relationship between teachers and students demonstrates more diverse, equal, and generative characteristics. The foundation of their interaction shifts from the original knowledge transmission to deep dialogue and collaborative inquiry centered around project tasks, with both parties forming a continuously interacting and mutually reinforcing learning community under the guidance of shared objectives.

3. Design of a Multi-dimensional Evaluation System for Teaching Model Effectiveness

3.1 Basic Orientation and Core Dimensions of Teaching Effectiveness Evaluation

Teaching effectiveness evaluation adheres to a developmental orientation, with its core objective focused on comprehensively diagnosing strengths and weaknesses in the teaching process to provide empirical evidence for instructional optimization, rather than merely making simple grade determinations. Evaluation activities permeate the entire process of project-based learning, addressing both performance during the learning process and the final learning outcomes, and emphasizing the promotion of mutual development between teaching and learning through continuous feedback. Under this orientation, the evaluation system systematically examines four core dimensions. The reading proficiency development dimension focuses on students' depth of comprehension of complex English texts, efficiency in information processing, and level of critical evaluation, paying particular attention

to students' strategy application and meaning-making processes when encountering unfamiliar academic texts. The collaborative inquiry effectiveness dimension examines the quality of students' communication within project teams, coordination in task division, and ability to co-construct knowledge, emphasizing the assessment of teams' collaborative cognitive development during complex problem-solving processes[5].

The higher-order thinking demonstration dimension focuses on the analytical, synthetic, evaluative, and creative abilities demonstrated by students in addressing project driving questions, examining their thinking quality through decision-making processes and problem solutions at various project stages. The learning engagement and motivation dimension reflects the teaching model's attractiveness and support effectiveness through students' participation levels, persistence, and autonomy in online and offline learning activities, with particular attention to students' psychological states and behavioral manifestations when confronting challenging tasks.

3.2 Design of Evaluation Indicators for Diversified Learning Outcomes

The design of evaluation indicators aims to comprehensively reflect students' diversified learning outcomes in project-based learning. Summative outcome indicators focus on the quality of final project deliverables, such as the academic rigor, logical coherence, and content innovation of project research reports, as well as the logical clarity, linguistic accuracy, and team coordination demonstrated in final oral presentations. Process outcome indicators concentrate on progress and performance throughout the learning journey, including information integration and independent thinking capabilities demonstrated through procedural artifacts like reading notes, literature reviews, and mind maps submitted at various project stages. Team collaboration process indicators evaluate cooperative spirit and problem-solving abilities reflected in group activity records and peer assessment feedback. The quality of individual reflection journals is regarded as a key metric for measuring students' metacognitive development and autonomous learning capabilities.

3.3 Methods for Collecting and Processing Evaluation Data

The collection of evaluation data employs multiple integrated channels to ensure comprehensiveness and objectivity of information. Quantitative data sources include the frequency of students' online activities recorded in the learning management system, resource access paths, and the quantity and quality of forum posts. The collection of qualitative data involves direct observation of students' performance in classroom discussions and project presentations, gathering multiple versions of project drafts and procedural artifacts, and analyzing students' personal reflective statements. The entire interactive process of team collaboration is completely preserved through historical records on online collaboration platforms.

At the data processing level, a combined strategy of quantitative statistics and qualitative analysis is adopted. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis are applied to quantitative data to reveal potential relationships between learning behavior patterns and outcome performance. Qualitative materials undergo systematic coding and thematic analysis to deeply explore students' perceptions of learning experiences, cognitive challenges encountered, and their application of strategies, thereby enabling triangulation and in-depth interpretation of quantitative data.

3.4 Teaching Improvement Mechanism Based on Evaluation Results

The ultimate realization of evaluation value depends on systematically transforming evaluation findings into concrete actions for teaching improvement. This mechanism begins with comprehensive interpretation of aggregated data to identify specific strengths and common challenges within the teaching model, such as in project design, activity organization, resource support, or teacher-student interaction. Based on this evidence, teaching adjustments can be implemented targetedly, for instance: optimizing the design of driving questions to enhance their challenge level and guidance capability, replanning connection points between online and offline activities to facilitate smoother learning processes, or supplementing specific types of reading strategy guidance resources to address identified competency gaps. Outstanding student works and effective collaboration cases discovered during evaluation can be transformed into exemplary teaching resources for future use. This improvement mechanism is essentially a continuous, data-driven cyclic process that ensures the teaching model can iteratively evolve based on empirical feedback, thereby achieving sustained enhancement of teaching effectiveness[6].

Conclusion

This study has preliminarily established a blended teaching framework for college English reading based on project-based learning through theoretical exploration, model construction, and evaluation design. Research indicates that this framework achieves organic integration of language learning and competency development through project-driven approaches, promotes deep combination of personalized inquiry and collaborative learning through blended activity processes, and ensures continuous improvement of teaching effectiveness through a multi-dimensional evaluation system. Future research could further validate the model's applicability within specific disciplinary contexts, explore personalized reading path planning supported by artificial intelligence technologies, and investigate the learning trajectories and support strategies for different student groups within this model, thereby continuously refining the theoretical system and practical solutions for college English reading instruction.

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