

A Practical Study of "Cloud Earth Connection" for Blended Teaching of College English Reading

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Abstract: This paper presents a comprehensive exploration of the innovative teaching methodology known as the "Cloud Earth Connection" in the context of college English reading instruction. Grounded in the principles of blended teaching, this practical study delves into the seamless integration of cloud technology with traditional pedagogy, fostering a dynamic and interactive learning environment. Through a rigorous examination of this approach, the paper investigates its pedagogical implications, effectiveness, and impact on student engagement and learning outcomes. Drawing on empirical research and theoretical frameworks, the study assesses the practical applications and challenges of the "Cloud Earth Connection" method, offering valuable insights into its potential to enhance college English reading education. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on blended teaching strategies and provides practical guidance for educators seeking innovative and effective ways to engage students in the digital age.

Keywords: Blended Teaching; Cloud Earth Connection; College English Reading; Cultural literacy

1. Introduction

1.1 Blended Teaching

In the contemporary landscape of education, the integration of technology and traditional pedagogical methods has developed into a new era of teaching and learning [1]. Blended teaching, a dynamic approach that integrates digital tools with conventional classroom strategies, has emerged as a transformative force in higher education. This paradigm shift is particularly evident in the realm of college English education, where educators

continuously seek innovative ways to engage students and enhance learning outcomes [2]. Blended teaching leverages the strengths of both traditional and digital methods, offering students a diverse range of learning opportunities that cater to varied learning styles and preferences.

1.2 Cloud Earth Connection

This paper embarks on a comprehensive exploration of a groundbreaking teaching methodology, referred to as the "Cloud Earth Connection," within the context of college English instruction. The essence of this approach lies in its seamless integration of cloud technology with traditional teaching practices, fostering a harmonious connection between the virtual and physical learning environments [3]. The study critically examines the multifaceted dimensions of this blended teaching method, focusing on its practical implications and efficacy from a unique vantage point.

1.3 College English Reading

College English Reading aims to instill essential values and cultivate students' critical thinking skills. While implementing the fundamental task of cultivating English language literacy, college English reading teaching using blended teaching of foreign languages under the perspective of digital age, it creates a personalized and highly participatory educational experience for students through the whole process of education and teaching, thus providing a new path for the construction of English teaching [4]. Within this context, the paper investigates how the "Cloud Earth Connection" can serve as a powerful catalyst for advancing the objectives of college English reading teaching in college English classrooms. Online teaching and learning have become the primary means to deliver education in China since late

February 2020 [5]. By scrutinizing the intersections of technology, pedagogy, and the reading elements, this research aims to shed light on the transformative potential of blended teaching methods in nurturing learners' critical thinking.

As the research delves into the intricacies of the "Cloud Earth Connection," this paper will unravel its practical applications, challenges, and opportunities seeking to offer valuable insights into the effective integration of digital tools and teaching college English reading, contributing meaningfully to the ongoing discourse on pedagogical innovation in higher education. In an era defined by rapid technological advancements and evolving educational paradigms, this study endeavors to enrich our understanding of how blended teaching strategies can shape the future of college English education while nurturing globalization awareness citizens [5].

2. Objectives of College English reading

College English reading aims to achieve a range of interconnected objectives. It strives to enhance students' English language ability by exposing them to diverse reading resources fostering empathy and understanding. Furthermore, this integration enriches language proficiency by providing real-life language usage examples, thereby honing students' linguistic skills. It also promotes critical thinking through the analysis of texts' themes, encouraging students to interpret texts and fostering deeper comprehension. Additionally, College English reading seeks to cultivate intercultural communication skills, encouraging meaningful dialogue about communication norms and practices. This approach instills text appreciation and respect, nurturing an understanding of various expressions. Moreover, it raises awareness about societal issues and global perspectives, encouraging students to engage responsibly with global challenges. Ultimately, these objectives collectively contribute to the holistic development of students, equipping them with language competence and a broader understanding of the world.

The learning process of the course is based on the basic objectives of linking theory to practice and learning to use language knowledge, improving students' language

expression ability, and cultivating students' habits of observing well and thinking independently, at the same time, Using critical thinking theory as a foundation to cultivate global awareness in teaching college English reading in China is a pedagogical approach that holds significant promise. Critical thinking theory emphasizes the development of students' abilities to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information, enabling them to engage deeply with content. In the context of teaching English reading, this approach encourages students to critically examine language nuances embedded in texts, challenging assumptions and biases. By integrating critical thinking exercises into the curriculum, students can analyze characters' motivations, societal norms, and historical contexts within literary works, fostering a nuanced understanding of cultural diversity. This method not only enhances language comprehension but also cultivates empathy and respect for different cultures. Moreover, encouraging students to question stereotypes and critically assess cultural representations in texts can empower them to navigate cross-cultural interactions more effectively. By integrating critical thinking theory into English reading lessons, educators can empower students to develop a profound global awareness that extends beyond language proficiency, preparing them to thrive in an increasingly interconnected global world.

Students are guided to read, translate and pay attention to resources using bilingual corpus videos and other teaching materials to carry out English reaching teaching, and cultivate senior talents with a sense of international outlook and strong business skills.

3. Teaching Design

Teaching activities endeavour to integrate online and offline high-quality resources, provide teaching content that is refined, in-depth, uplifted and expandable, and scientifically assess the learning effect.

3.1. Teaching Content

According to the characteristics of university English courses and the construction requirements of "Globalization Awareness", the objectives of English teaching in the context of cultivating globalization skills encompass a broad range of goals aimed at

preparing students to thrive in an interconnected and culturally diverse world. These objectives are designed to develop students' linguistic proficiency, cultural competence, and global awareness, enabling them to effectively communicate, collaborate, and empathize with people from diverse backgrounds, so as to further highlight the function of "cultivating critical thinking" in the courses.

Table 1: Summary of the Culture Elements of the Teaching Content of the Curriculum

Contents	Teaching Objectives
Love for our families and our country (Duty and Responsibility)	Awareness of national and contemporary spirit, and identification with and adherence to excellent traditional Chinese culture To establish the belief of "Love and Responsibility"
Personal Character(How to be a good man)	(1) Morality: social, personal and professional ethics. Humanistic qualities, correct worldview, values and outlook on life, etc (2) "Being a good man": guiding students to be "good people" for the country, society, environment, family and themselves
Scientific view (How to do things)	(1) Perseverance, diligence, vision, critical thinking, innovation and academic integrity; (2) Students are guided to become proficient in a specialized technology and strive to become the professional and technical talents needed by the country

3.2 Teaching Methodology

Using student-centred teaching methods, the researcher has changed the traditional teacher-centred teaching method of "teacher speaks, student listens", paying more attention to how much students have learned and how much they can apply than how much the teacher has taught them.

In the way of "flip class", "online and offline learning", "in-class competition, on-campus competition, and off-campus competition", the

integration of competition and education to educate people, expand the position of educating people, cover all the staff, all the learning time and learning process, in the way of "learning by teaching", "learning by teaching", "learning by teaching", "learning by teaching", and "learning by teaching". On the basis of "promoting learning through competition", "promoting teaching through competition" and "promoting reform through competition".

When teaching each unit, students are asked to work together to complete the task or answer questions based on the corresponding topics and questions in the unit through discussion. Group tasks require members to collaborate and complete specific tasks, inspire students to think, search, analyse and judge, and finally organize and present the tasks, with the teacher evaluating and summarizing. When students think and analyse, teachers focus on guiding and prompting, and ultimately achieve the students' "thinking - analysis, reasoning, selection, hands-on, open - inductive sorting, deep understanding - application of innovation" layer by layer. -Application of innovation" progressive ability goals.

3.3 Specific Teaching Methods

(1) Diversified teaching methods: Lecture (classroom teaching), research (students consulting information), work (courseware, digital stories), presentation (students' speeches, reports), discussion (discussions, debates).

(2) "Competition and Teaching Integration": organizes and guides students to actively participate and experience. Through the design of special competitions, organizing and guiding students to actively participate and arouse their emotional resonance can effectively motivate students to generate internal motivation for learning, and effectively promote students' understanding, mastery, expansion and deepening of curriculum knowledge.

(3) Expanding teaching time and space: Teaching by the way of combining the activities of in-class and off class, inside and outside the school and online and offline.

(4) Collaborative teaching: Collaborating the school leaders, teachers and members of student associations to educate students.

(5) Course evaluation and feedback: Students will be evaluated through certain evaluation

tools, such as the “U Campus” platform and the “iWrite” platform, and targeted lectures and evaluations will be conducted based on the evaluation results.

3.4 Integration of culture and the course

Selecting reading materials that reflect diverse cultural perspectives, incorporating discussions about global cultural norms and values, and exploring historical and societal contexts within literary works. Additionally, incorporating multimedia resources, guest lectures, and interactive activities related to culture can provide a holistic learning experience. Through actively cultivating and practicing the integration of global awareness into the course to enhance language proficiency and nurtures cultural awareness, empathy, and intercultural competence among students, preparing them for global citizenship and effective cross-cultural communication.

Selection of teaching materials: linking the contents of professional courses, fostering cultural confidence and pride, and telling Chinese stories well.

Diversified sources of teaching materials: including the material of Foreign Studies “U Campus” platform, authoritative English websites at home and abroad, and new media such as WeChat.

Group effort in lesson preparation: course team members prepare lessons collectively and teachers work together to select teaching materials, choose teaching methods, determine teaching steps, and customize interactions and assignments.

The development of special projects of "integration of competition and teaching": Value teachers' teaching ability competitions and students' competition development and participation in order to achieve "competition for teaching" and "competition for learning". To achieve the goals of "promoting teaching by competition", "promoting learning by competition", "promoting reform by competition", and "promoting research by competition", the school competition develops innovative competition projects that fit the "Heroic elements", such as the "English Calligraphy Competition writing Heroic Stories", "Party History Oral English Language Competition", "Patriotic Old Revolutionary, Old Red Army Soldier Life Story Translation Competition" and so on.

By combining the teaching forms in-class and of class, online and offline, and making good use of the teaching materials, the design of teaching activities and various special events outside the classroom, the students are able to appreciate the culture elements while reading.

4. Teaching Process of Integrating culture into College English Reading Teaching

The guiding method adheres to the principles of combining indoctrination and infiltration, and combining explicit and implicit education, and guides students to shift from passive and spontaneous learning to active and conscious learning, and to take the initiative to take action in learning.

The following is an example of the teaching design of "iexplore 2- the Chinese zodiac", the second text of the fifth unit of the "New Generation of University English Comprehensive Curriculum - Improvement Part 1".

The basic process is:

Collaboratively prepare for the lesson: Comprehensively read the text → determining the content of the course's cultural content and the teaching content → form the teaching objectives → organise online and offline resources → determine the teaching methods → design the teaching interactions → arrange consolidation exercises → sum up the teaching achievements and failures.



Figure 1. The Basic Process of Preparing a Lesson

The text is aimed at telling a Chinese story well in English --of the Chinese zodiac, the text is about the interpretation of the Chinese zodiac, about what the Chinese phases of the Chinese zodiac are, about the myths about the dragon, about the understanding of the dragon in the minds of the Chinese people, and

discusses the reasons for the popularity of the dragon as a phases of the Chinese zodiac, responding to the requirements of the era of "telling the story of China well", and meeting the requirements of the era of "telling China Stories Well". Discuss the reasons for the popularity of the dragon in China, responding to the requirements of the times of "telling Chinese Stories Well".

(1) Introduction of classroom teaching

Teachers can arrange students to watch the video, discuss and share whether idioms, sayings and allusions related to the Chinese zodiac reflect these qualities in the video, and at the same time introduce the study of the text. Resource access address:

https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV14J411g7mc/?spm_id_from=333.788.recommend_more_video.16;

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Figure 2. Picture of Part of the Teaching Content

(2) Text Teaching: "The Chinese zodiac explained" is studied in three main stages

Pre-reading: Questions: "What's the Chinese zodiac? How do you describe it and explain the belief and tradition of it?" Adopting a problem-based teaching methodology, the teaching activities of language, knowledge and culture sessions are progressively developed to inspire students to tell the Chinese Stories Well, exchange ideas between Chinese and Western cultures, analyse the cultural differences here in a comparative method, tell our cultural characteristics and advantages, and build up cultural confidence.

While-reading: first assign students to read the text with the practice questions 1 and 2, and check their answers by asking questions. Guide students to try to analyse the structure of the chapter, paragraph by

paragraph, and the key points of words and sentences, and the teacher will give comments and explain the main points of language, such as sentence translation. Students master language skills in order to tell Chinese stories better.

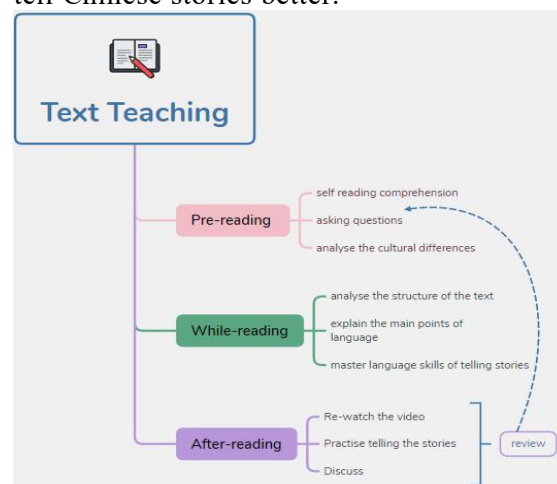


Figure 3. Teaching Process of Text Teaching

Explore 2 Understanding the text

Dragon 龙

Eastern dragons were said to live in a lake or ocean. They are held with high respect from the people in the East. To the Chinese, dragons represent power, wealth and wisdom.	Western dragons were said to live in the deserts or even in fire. They are viewed as unwanted and something people want to get rid of.
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Figure 4. Teaching Content: Comparing and Contrasting Chinese and Western Cultures

After-reading: Re-watch the video introducing the legend of the origin of the Chinese zodiac, "The Race of the Twelve Chinese Zodiac Signs". After watching the video, students will practise telling the legend in English and discuss whether they match the characteristics of their own zodiac sign.

Resources available at: https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1Rx41117A2/?spm_id_from=333.788.recommend_more_video.1

(3) Homework assignment, highlight the practice after the text study, the next class to explain the key points, especially the sentence translation practice part.



Figure 5. Teaching Content

A. Exercises after class

The Translation Assignment section selects sections that are characteristic of Chinese culture and lays the foundation for telling a good Chinese story:

Sharpening your skills

Task 2 Translate the paragraph into English, using the words below.

preference impact ratio give birth

哲学深深植根于文化。生肖、阴阳以及五行说 (theory of the five elements) 相结合, 对人们的决定和信仰产生了很重要的影响。如果你问中国人是否相信生肖, 很多人一开始会说: “哦, 不。我们是现代人。”可是, 当你问他们准备何时要小孩, 他们可能会说: “要个龙宝宝不错。”在2012年这个龙年, 中国的人口出生率增长了五个百分点。由于传统上对于男孩的偏爱, 当年男孩和女孩的出生比率为120比100。这些单个的以家庭为单位的决定可能是小范围的, 但这些决定对消费需求的影响却是实实在在的, 甚至会影响到整个经济。

新一代大学英语 (提高版) 综合教程 Unit 4

Figure 6. In-Class Exercise

B. Out-class group work

Classroom group presentation task: Outside the classroom, the group chooses a topic from a variety of themes about Chinese culture, makes an English presentation, divides the work among the team, collects materials, makes a PPT slide, presents the competition in the classroom, and the teacher evaluates the students, records the corresponding grades, and cultivates the students' ability of self-study and teamwork. Discussions and group tasks are all experiential learning tasks, cultivating students to learn by doing, which is the embodiment of students' learning as the centre.

C. Supplemental reading assignment for class:

The 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac: dragon the article describes the image of the dragon in Chinese legend and the reason it is the fifth in the zodiac. Read the article to help students learn more about the mythology of the dragon and discuss the reasons for the popularity of the dragon as a Chinese zodiac sign.

Address for resource access:

<https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-01-16/The-12-animals-of-the-Chinese-Zodiac-Dragon--NfX20zWWfm/index.html>

4. Reflection on This Study

Engaging in the practical study of the "Cloud Earth Connection" for blended teaching in college English reading has been a transformative and enriching experience. This innovative approach, which seamlessly integrates cloud technology with traditional teaching methods, has illuminated the potential of technology-enhanced learning in our classrooms. Throughout this study, several key reflections have emerged, shaping our understanding of effective pedagogical practices and the dynamic nature of contemporary education.

However, this journey has also presented challenges. The need for consistent access to technology, the development of digital literacy skills, and the creation of inclusive online spaces are vital considerations in ensuring the success of blended teaching. Addressing these challenges has reinforced the importance of ongoing professional development and the integration of digital literacy training into the curriculum. Overcoming these challenges has been a learning process, pushing the boundaries of pedagogical methods and encouraging innovative teaching strategies.

The research has inspired a commitment to promoting English language competence and fostering global citizenship. Moving forward, this research will undoubtedly shape future research endeavors, encouraging a more nuanced understanding of cultural integration's profound impact on education and society at large.

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