Research on the Construction and Sharing of Teaching Resources Based on Cross-School Learning Community: A Case Study of Intercultural Communication Course

Yi Wang

School of Foreign Studies, University of Science and Technology Liaoning, Anshan 114051, China

Abstract

Foreign language education in the context of new humanities faces both new challenges and opportunities. The construction and sharing of high-quality teaching resources in foreign language education is a crucial aspect that needs to keep up with the times. Cross-school learning community is a learning mode in the era of big data. This study attempts to construct an ecological model of foreign language teaching based on cross-school learning community by relying on the Liaoning educational platform for higher education, aiming to solve the problems of lack of in-depth communication between cooperating parties in cross-school elective courses, lack of substantial innovation in teaching models, and ineffective teaching outcomes. Cross-school credit enrollment is a blended learning format that integrates online and offline teaching methods and facilitates the sharing of high-quality resources. Practice has proven that cross-school credit enrollment can meet students' personalized learning needs, cultivate their ability for independent learning, and promote the sharing of high-quality teaching resources among universities, thus effectively resolving the problem of insufficient course resources in higher education institutions.

Keywords

Construction and sharing of teaching resources, Learning community, Foreign language courses, Cross-school credit enrollment, Blended learning.

1. Introduction

The Ministry of Education released the document "Several Opinions on Improving the Quality of Higher Education" in March 2012, emphasizing the importance of building a shared system of high-quality educational resources, establishing cooperation platforms between universities, relevant departments, research institutions, and industry enterprises to promote collaborative education, cooperative nurturing, and collaborative development. The document also highlights the construction of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in universities and proposes sharing and co-building high-quality teaching resources through course selection and credit recognition. In February 2020, the Ministry of Education issued the "Work Points for the Higher Education Department of the Ministry of Education in 2020", which pointed out the need to establish a new model of "Internet+ Teaching" and "Intelligence+ Teaching" to promote the transformation of learning methods, improve teaching efficiency, and stimulate the vitality of teaching and learning.

In this context, establishing a "learning community" where scholars (including platform-building teachers and course-taking teachers) and learners interact and learn together is an important measure to achieve "Internet+Teaching" [1]. A cross-institutional learning community is an organizational form aimed at promoting cooperation and communication between different universities, facilitating the development of learning and education through

resource sharing, experience exchange, and knowledge dissemination. Members of the cross-institutional learning community can include teachers, students, scholars, and educational administrators from different universities. They can jointly develop learning plans, share teaching materials, conduct collaborative research, and organize academic activities, providing participants with wider learning opportunities and development platforms. Through learning communities, different universities can achieve resource sharing, complementarity, and mutual assistance, promoting educational reform and improving teaching quality [2].

Based on social constructivism theory and educational cooperation theory, the learning community is based on social interaction, promoting the co-construction and sharing of knowledge through cooperation and communication between different universities [3]. Educational cooperation theory emphasizes cooperation and mutual assistance among different entities, advocating cooperation between schools, teachers, and students, and achieving common development through resource sharing and experience and knowledge exchange. Relevant empirical studies have shown that the teaching mode of learning communities can effectively enhance learners' cognitive engagement and English proficiency.

However, there is relatively little empirical exploration combining learning communities with foreign language classroom teaching reforms targeting English majors in China. This study attempts to construct a cross-institutional learning community and implement a blended learning mode, where offline smart classrooms and the Liaoning educational platform for higher education provide technical support for the smooth implementation of this mode. Platform-building teachers, course-taking teachers, and learners break through the limitations of time and space, realize the sharing and co-construction of high-quality teaching resources, and create an interactive and diversified teaching model.

2. The Construction of a Cross-school Learning Community

The existing cross-school study primarily employs the "resource sharing" approach between curriculum developers and users, wherein both parties simultaneously utilize a particular course resource. The cross-school study model proposed in this research breaks away from the traditional unilateral cooperation mode, where curriculum developers provide courses and users apply them. Instead, curriculum developers and users' teaching staff collaborate to establish a cross-school community, within which the teaching community collectively designs instructional goals, formulates teaching steps, and implements assessment plans. This approach ensures that the credit courses taken across universities not only meet the curriculum requirements of the curriculum developers but also cater to the personalized needs of the users. Consequently, the curriculum system becomes more comprehensive, and the practical application effect of the courses is enhanced.

For this cross-school credit study, the participating institutions are Shenyang University (the curriculum developer) and University of Science and Technology Liaoning (the user). University of Science and Technology Liaoning has chosen to utilize the online learning resources offered by Shenyang University (the course name: English-speaking nations' society and culture), available on the Liaoning educational platform for higher education. They completed a semester of online learning and assessment based on the online learning materials (videos, texts, etc.), assignments, and assessment criteria set by both parties.

3. Research Design

3.1. Research Participants

This study focuses on the first-year students majoring in English in the School of Foreign Languages, University of Science and Technology Liaoning, Class of 2022. There are a total of

69 participants, with the lowest score of 82 and the highest score of 134 in the college entrance examination of English subject.

3.2.   Research Objectives

(1) To create a learning community as the core operating mechanism and dynamically integrate the advantages of blended learning and flipped classrooms in the construction of cross-school credit courses. The aim is to cultivate students' high-level abilities such as autonomous learning, collaborative learning, exploratory learning, continuous learning, and innovative thinking.

(2) To establish an open, dynamic, interactive, and shared teaching ecosystem with the goal of synchronously improving the quality and effectiveness of foreign language learner's ability development and curriculum ideological and political education.

3.3.   Research Questions

This study implements a semester-long teaching reform based on intercultural communication courses, aiming to investigate the promoting effect of the teaching model based on cross-school learning communities on English learners. The main research questions are as follows:

(1) Does the cross-school learning community help improve learners' comprehensive English language proficiency?

(2) Does the cross-school learning community contribute to the enhancement of learners' autonomous learning ability?

(3) How does the cross-school learning community affect the quality improvement of learner interaction and collaboration?

3.4.   Implementation

This research integrates the online resources from the Liaoning educational platform for higher education and the offline classroom of intercultural communication to achieve resource sharing through pre-class "micro-lessons" for autonomous learning, effectively expanding classroom content. In addition, this research incorporates the English translated version of "Xi Jinping's Talks on Governing the Country and Statecraft" as a featured teaching material for this course. Through "Xi Jinping's Talks on Governing the Country and Statecraft," students gain an understanding of China's contemporary development concepts and domestic and foreign policies, integrating the national conditions into the classroom. Excellent traditional cultural resources and red culture resources are also integrated into the classroom, allowing students in intercultural communication courses to not only learn about the culture and overview of English-speaking countries through cross-school elective courses but also gain in-depth understanding of China's national conditions and culture, shaping their character and cultivating their "Chinese identity," enhancing students' awareness and confidence in Chinese cultural dissemination.

At the same time, this course follows the "three-dimensional integration" teaching model of pre-class autonomous learning, in-class learning and application, and post-class practice. By releasing cross-school elective MOOC resources before class, providing in-depth interpretation of pre-class autonomous learning content during class, and conducting workshops for practical expansion after class, it can stimulate students' creativity and involvement, cultivate their critical thinking and innovative thinking, and reconstruct the classroom teaching mode.

The assessment of the course mainly involves three parts: cross-school credit course (English-speaking countries' society and culture) accounts for 25%, intercultural classroom learning accounts for 25%, and final assessment accounts for 50%. The cross-school credit course (English-speaking countries' society and culture) includes tasks-based learning, in-class activities, and post-class assignments. Online tasks-based learning and in-class activities mainly focus on basic knowledge, which need to be completed by students before studying
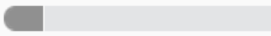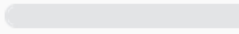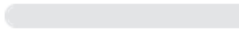
intercultural communication courses, primarily to cultivate students' autonomous learning ability. The intercultural communication classroom learning part mainly consists of classroom performance, quizzes, group activities, and assignments, comprehensively assessing students' overall performance. The final assessment takes the form of a final paper, emphasizing the assessment of students' higher-order thinking. This assessment method combines process evaluation, final evaluation, and teacher-student cooperative evaluation, relying on the Liaoning educational platform for higher education, simultaneously incorporating online and offline activities of intercultural courses and cross-school credit courses (English-speaking countries' society and culture) into the assessment system. This allows for the diversification of the evaluation subjects and methods, truly achieving "evaluation in learning, learning in evaluation," and realizing comprehensive and three-dimensional evaluation of students' learning processes and output.

3.5. Analysis of Effects

In this study, a student-centered approach was adopted, bringing about changes in students' learning methods. They were able to have greater autonomy in selecting learning materials by providing multi-module online preview content. Additionally, their study time became more flexible and self-directed. Students no longer passively learn but actively explore and learn, fully demonstrating their initiative and autonomy through group discussions, problem analysis, and resolution. Such a learning environment also helps cultivate students' teamwork communication and problem-solving abilities, further enhancing their comprehensive skills.

At the end of the teaching experiment period, we conducted a questionnaire survey on the implementation of the "Intercultural Communication" course. The survey results showed that students had varying degrees of improvement in English proficiency and intercultural communication abilities. Among them, 92.5% of students believed they made progress in English translation skills. The proportions of students who experienced improvement in English writing, English reading, and intercultural communication were 87.7%, 91.4%, and 97.9% respectively. Regarding the question "I am satisfied with the assessment methods of this course," over 99% of the students chose "strongly agree" or "agree." It can be seen that students appreciate the assessment methods of this course, see Table 1.

Table 1. The Benefits of Studying the "Intercultural Communication" Course and Participating in Cross-School Electives

Options	Total Count	Proportions
Strongly agree	59	86.76%
Agree	9	13.24%
Not sure	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Participants	68	

In addition, a survey was conducted on whether the cross-school course content assigned by the teacher was appropriate in terms of difficulty, and over 99% of the students believed the level of difficulty was suitable, see Table 2.

Table 2. Appropriate Level of Difficulty in Cross-School Course Content Assigned by the Teacher

Options	Total count	Proportions
Strongly agree	55	80.88%
Agree	13	19.12%
Not sure	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Participants	68	

The survey results showed that the students' satisfaction with the design of the course was over 99%. It can be seen that the teaching effectiveness of the course was relatively high.

4. Reflection on Teaching

As a collaborative teaching model, the cross-school learning community requires reflection and evaluation to continuously improve and enhance teaching effectiveness. First, it is necessary to assess the quality of teaching. This can be done through teaching evaluation tools, student feedback, teacher communication, and other means of assessment. Based on the evaluation results, improvement measures can be formulated. Second, reflection on the collaboration mechanisms and communication methods within the cross-school learning community is important. It is crucial to determine whether the cooperation mechanisms and communication methods are efficient and smooth, and whether they can promote collaboration and communication between teachers and students. Consideration should be given to whether more online collaboration tools and platforms are needed to provide convenient ways for collaboration, thereby enhancing the quality of teaching[4]. Additionally, it is important to evaluate the impact of the cross-school learning community on students' learning outcomes and overall development. Assessment of students' learning outcomes and development can be done through measures such as grades, academic performance, and self-evaluation, while also considering students' individual characteristics and developmental needs to provide targeted teaching and support.

Reflection is also needed on the sharing and utilization of resources within the learning community, including teaching resources, facilities, and equipment[5]. It is worth considering whether further optimization of resource sharing and utilization is necessary to improve teaching effectiveness and enhance student experience. Evaluation of teachers' professional development within the cross-school learning community, including their improvement in teaching design, methods, and skills, is also essential. Training and exchange opportunities can be provided to support teachers in their professional growth. Through reflection on the cross-school learning community, problems and areas for improvement can be continually discovered, and appropriate improvement strategies can be developed. This helps to enhance teaching quality and effectiveness, and promote the development and growth of the cross-school learning community.

5. Conclusion

The application of modern information technology provides convenience and enhances the efficiency and level of collaboration and communication within the cross-school learning community. With the effective sharing of educational resources, the cross-school learning community can promote balanced development of education and strengthen the integration

and balance of regional education. At the same time, the cross-school learning community can serve the cultivation of talents in non-linguistic disciplines. The credit-sharing project based on the cross-school learning community is a new form of teaching that goes beyond online platforms while relying on them. It integrates online and offline teaching modes, achieves digitization and intelligence in foreign language teaching, and provides effective approaches for flipped classrooms, inquiry-based learning, and autonomous learning.

Acknowledgments

References

[1] Pi, W., & Zhu, S. Learning Community: Choices and Expectations for Regional Teacher Development. Education Theory and Practice, vol. 26 (2022), p. 34-37.

[2] Dai, W., & Liang, H. On the Construction of Cross-Border Teacher Educator Professional Learning Communities. Educational Development Research, vol.2 (2022), p. 1-8.

[3] Wen, Q., & Zhang, H. Theoretical and Practical Exploration of Building Multilingual Teacher Professional Learning Communities across Departments. Foreign Languages World, vol. 6 (2019), p. 9-17.

[4] Huang, K., & Zhou, X. Investigation of the Construction and Application Status of MOOCs in Foreign Language Education in China. Modern Technology Education, vol. 12 (2017), p. 88-93.

[5] Zhao, C. Research on the Sharing Strategy of High-Quality Education Resources in the United States from the Perspective of New Media and Its Implications for China. Higher Education Journal, vol. 1 (2020), p. 1-3.