# A Practical Study of College English Blended Teaching According to Learning Engagement Theory

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*Abstract:* Learning engagement theory is put forward by Keszli, an American distance education expert, which is a summary of his 20-year experience in distance education with his collaborators. Blended teaching mode is the integration of traditional teaching mode and Internet technology, creating a rich and diverse effective classroom online and offline. This mode closely focuses on the teaching idea of combining teacher-oriented and student-centered, and through its implementation, it can better mobilize students' learning initiative and stimulate students' enthusiasm and interest in learning English. This paper first summarizes the research and practice progress of learning engagement theory, and then puts forward the necessity of applying learning engagement theory to college English blended teaching. On this basis, the instructional design mode is constructed.

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, with the rapid development of society, we are in an era of information explosion. The wide application of the Internet has changed our production and life style. All kinds of mobile terminals provide people with various possibilities, and knowledge and information are within reach, which makes the traditional industries face tremendous impact and change. Especially in the era of big data, there are more and more opportunities for cross-border communication, and English, as a general language, plays an important role. Therefore, we must learn English in the era of big data. There is no doubt that to learn English well, one is to learn, and the other is to teach. As a new teaching form, learning engagement theory provides a new idea for the smooth development of college English teaching, and English blended teaching based on learning engagement theory has important research and practical significance.

## 2. Overview of learning engagement theory and blended teaching

### 2.1 Learning engagement theory

Learning engagement theory is put forward by American educational technology expert Keith Lee on the basis of distance education, which is also called the theory of engagement or participation. The premise of this theory is that learners must devote themselves to learning to produce effective learning, and the development of these learning activities depends on the interaction between learners

and their peers and the completion of valuable and meaningful tasks [1-2]. The basic idea of learning engagement theory is to create a successful cooperative team in non-traditional teaching environment, and make it carry out meaningful learning based on certain tasks.

Learning engagement theory has three basic principles, namely, getting along, creating and contributing. The principle of getting along means that learners should have the spirit of teamwork in the learning process, exchange their ideas in teamwork and improve learning efficiency. The principle of creation refers to taking learning as a creative and purposeful activity. The principle of contribution emphasizes that students' learning achievements should have a positive impact on the outside world, and learners can successfully apply their knowledge and skills to real life, thus completing the transfer from theory to practical application.

Learning engagement theory emphasizes that "learning activities should be meaningful and take place in the real world", which is generally recognized by the education circles today, and has many similarities with many learning theories. It emphasizes meaningful learning, which is consistent with constructivist learning theory; It emphasizes cooperative learning based on a certain situation, which is consistent with situational learning theory; It emphasizes fully arousing learners' enthusiasm and making them devote themselves to learning, which is consistent with the theory of learning motivation.

## 2.2 Blended teaching

Researchers have different understandings about blended learning. Among them, the simplest understanding is that blended learning is a learning method that integrates online learning, face-to-face learning and self-paced learning in the form of pre-planning. It is a combination of various learning methods and is different from a single learning method. Literature [3] holds that blended learning refers to four different concepts: combining or mixing various networking technologies (such as real-time virtual classroom, self-paced learning, writing learning, streaming video, audio and text) to achieve educational goals. Literature [4] thinks that blended learning is to combine the advantages of traditional learning and network learning, which not only plays the leading role of teachers, but also fully reflects the initiative, enthusiasm and creativity of students' learning; Literature [5] suggests that blended learning can be regarded as the organic integration of face-to-face classroom learning and online learning.

It is generally accepted that blended teaching is not the supplement of online technology to traditional teaching, but the product of the development of Internet and information technology to a certain stage, and it is the organic combination of traditional teaching and online teaching, which can realize the complementary advantages of both. Teachers can communicate face-to-face with students through the traditional classroom to enhance the emotional communication between teachers and students, and provide abundant teaching resources by using the online platform, which is convenient for students to carry out independent inquiry learning. Students can not only make full use of network teaching resources to make up for the loopholes in traditional classroom learning, but also play the main role of learning through various computer-aided tools to cultivate their enthusiasm and creativity.

## 3. The necessity of carrying out blended teaching in college English courses

In college English courses, although teachers will improve students' listening and speaking ability according to their English foundation and employment direction, the teaching mode is hindered by many obstacles, so the teaching effect is usually not satisfactory. This makes listening and speaking teaching impossible, let alone teachers and students have more time to interact, and teachers can't correct problems for all students in time. In addition, the class hours of "university courses" have been decreasing, and the teaching content must end in the specified class hours, so the teaching

objectives cannot be achieved. In addition, college English courses focus on teaching materials, and teachers are constantly expanding teaching resources. However, the content is still lacking in characteristics, and students are not interested in courses, so their active learning ability is getting worse and worse.

The mixed teaching mode of learning engagement theory and old teaching mode can fill the vacancy of old teaching mode. It can not only increase more learning resources, but also increase the time and methods of English listening and speaking teaching. It can also see students' performance in class in time and stimulate their enthusiasm for learning, and achieve the goal of characteristic teaching. Students can also quickly improve their oral English expression ability.

## 4. Construction of college English blended teaching mode based on learning engagement theory

### 4.1 Vigorously implement "cooperative inquiry learning" and highlight the cooperation of virtual learning community

The term "cooperative learning" first appeared in the United States. Up to now, cooperative learning has been studied abroad for decades, and the practice of cooperative learning has spread all over dozens of countries and regions such as the United States, Canada, Israel, Germany, Australia, the Netherlands, Japan and Nigeria [6]. In the virtual learning community, we should vigorously implement cooperative inquiry method, optimize teaching methods and promote learners to explore in cooperation and competition. Embodies the cooperation of "interaction, management, evaluation and planning". Cooperation and inquiry learning in virtual community not only includes common online questioning, consultation and counseling, but also includes discussion, answering questions, role-playing games, etc. It can be a complex and long-term cooperative project formed by multiple teams and groups, and it can also carry out cross-disciplinary and cross-group cooperative inquiry.

Instructional design is to transform the principles of teaching and learning into systematic plans. Learning engagement theory is applied to classroom teaching, so the teaching design should first respect the teaching principles. The author designs the teaching design mode of learning engagement theory applied to college English. As shown in fig. 1.
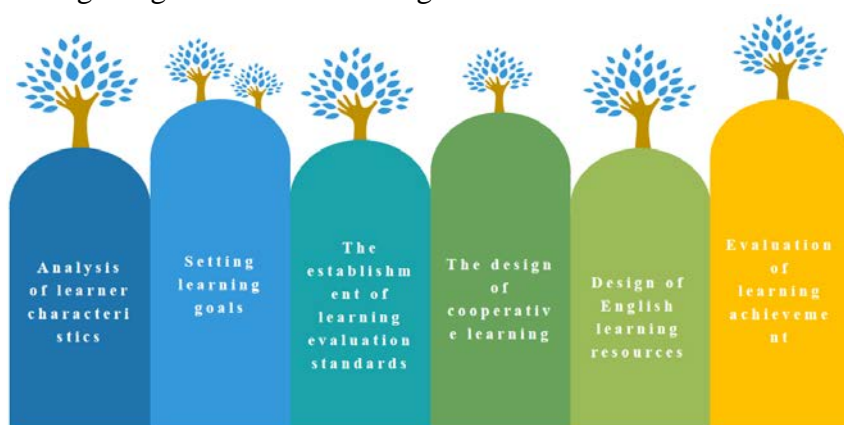


Fig. 1. Teaching design mode of college English classroom based on learning engagement theory

(1) Analysis of learner characteristics

The mode of instructional design emphasizes learner-centered, and the analysis of learners includes students' initial level and cognitive development level. When designing the situation, we should pay attention to the openness and authenticity of the situation, and set up a variety of situations, so that students can choose freely according to their own interests and hobbies and give full play to their strengths.

(2) Setting of learning objectives

The core educational goal of human beings includes three fields: cognitive field, action field and emotion field. These three areas are exactly consistent with the behavioral input, cognitive input and emotional input to be achieved by learning engagement theory. Therefore, when setting learning goals for students, we should set reasonable teaching goals from the three-dimensional perspective.

(3) Establishment of learning evaluation standard

Learning evaluation is to judge the changes of students' learning achievements according to teaching objectives. Teachers should make evaluation standards before teaching activities. In the evaluation of the following teaching activities, the teacher formulates a scale, and the evaluation of students' achievements and performance strictly follows this standard.

(4) Design of cooperative learning

The principle of getting along with learning engagement theory is reflected in the division of group cooperation, which means that learners should have the spirit of team cooperation and exchange their ideas in team cooperation. Generally, the division of cooperative groups is heterogeneous grouping, in which students with different characteristics are divided into one group, so that each member can complete different tasks, and everyone can cooperate and learn from each other.

(5) Design of English learning resources

That is to say, we should make use of the advantages of information technology, design learning resources and make the learning process informationized. Various media resources and network information resources provided to students in the process of learning. The information technology class is in the network multimedia classroom, which can provide students with abundant learning resources.

(6) Evaluation of academic achievement

In the teaching process, teachers should pay attention to giving students space and time, allowing students to reflect on themselves and realize the process of self-improvement, that is, self-evaluation. Let students find and solve problems in self-evaluation.

In the traditional virtual learning community, because every learner learns through computer and network, it is inevitable that there will be some problems such as loneliness, lack of interest in learning, separation from learning groups, distraction, and inability to communicate normally. However, through cooperative inquiry learning, it can better promote the communication and support among members, establish social networks, and maintain the stability of "teaching and learning" in the learning community.

## 4.2 Teaching implementation process

(1) Import before class

Before the course, the course portal is built through the online course platform to demonstrate the online operation method, and then the teaching system, i.e. course notice, syllabus, teaching calendar, key and difficult points, modular test questions bank, etc., is built on the online teaching platform, and at the same time, the teaching plan, courseware, audio and video materials are uploaded to the platform for students to learn [7]. Students log in to the college English course on the online course platform, complete the preview, acquisition and consolidation of knowledge independently according to the teaching requirements of each unit, and prepare for the following classroom learning. Finally, students are allowed to submit the questions they encounter in the learning process to the learning platform, forming autonomous learning feedback.

In the actual teaching of college English, different knowledge points are aggregated in the form of themes and displayed in units. For the unit text learning part, we designed targeted guiding materials, that is, the instructional design of the first organizer. For example, the unit text "An Impressive

English lesson" is a synthesis of words and phrases knowledge, grammar knowledge and related cultural knowledge related to the unit theme, which together constitute the knowledge dimension of the theme text "Attitudes Towards Science", as shown in Figure 2 below.
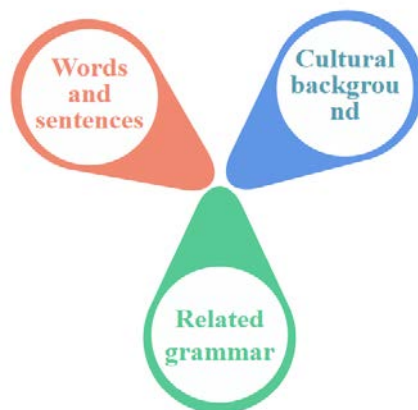


Fig. 2. Knowledge dimension diagram of theme text

In view of this knowledge dimension, combined with the selected teaching media and teaching tools, the corresponding guiding materials are designed, and these guiding materials are pushed to students in time before the actual classroom teaching of unit texts.

(2) Classroom teaching

First of all, teachers guide, answer and summarize what students have learned online before class, and then they still use multimedia courseware to explain new knowledge points and present teaching content in class. In order to improve students' English proficiency, this course fully mobilizes students' participation enthusiasm, organizes various forms of interactive activities, and requires individuals or groups to cooperate.

(3) After-school tutoring

After-school tutoring focuses on online homework and answering questions, consolidating and strengthening students' learned knowledge. Teachers in this course use itest platform to arrange modular homework for students, and strengthen their autonomous learning in reading, listening, writing and translation. Students discuss on mosoteach platform among teachers and classmates. After the homework is completed, mosoteach platform will automatically correct it, and teachers can also correct and comment on it. Under the specific guidance of teachers, students reflect on college English learning, which is uploaded to the platform for discussion and comparison among class students. This learning reflection also provides a reference for teachers to evaluate students' actual learning effect, and can also become a renewable learning and teaching resource.

## 4.3 Performance evaluation system

This teaching mode combines online learning with offline learning, breaks the limitation of time and space, and the curriculum platform and classroom teaching complement each other. Autonomous learning, student-student interaction and teacher-student interaction create multi-dimensional communication opportunities for learning and create a student-centered classroom teaching environment.

At the same time, this teaching mode inspires students' thoughts. Adopt multiple evaluation system, pay attention to process assessment, and integrate online learning achievements with classroom performance into formative evaluation system. Teachers should track and feedback students' online and offline learning dynamics in time, and supervise students' rectification to help

students improve their learning enthusiasm and efficiency.

## 5. Problems need further study

Learning engagement theory points out that in order to learn efficiently, students must devote themselves to learning activities. The development of technology-based learning and teaching should follow three principles: 1) emphasize the cooperation among students; 2) Project-based learning tasks; 3) Non-pedantic attention can make learning creative, meaningful and authentic. Although learning engagement theory comes from the summary of practical experience of distance education, and is not directly derived from the framework of other learning theories, it has much in common with many learning theories. Therefore, although learning engagement theory is only a learning model in the technology-based learning environment, it integrates many elements of previous learning models (or learning theories).

However, learning engagement theory is different from many previous computer-aided learning models, which emphasize individualized teaching. Learning engagement theory places great emphasis on interaction, but this kind of interaction refers to interpersonal interaction in group activities. The difference between the two shows that at present, the distance education sector has tended to use computers as a tool for interpersonal communication, not just as a media for spreading knowledge. Moreover, compared with previous learning theories, learning engagement theory emphasizes that learning should take place in real learning situations.

## 6. Conclusion

In recent years, with the continuous development of modern educational technology in China, virtual learning community has been widely used. The learning based on learning engagement theory is based on constructivism, which emphasizes the learners' more meaningful, self-controlled and dedicated learning style, and has the characteristics of cooperation, creativity and contribution. Learning engagement theory plays an important role in virtual learning community. The construction of college English mixed teaching mode based on learning engagement theory is conducive to combining the advantages of traditional teaching methods with the advantages of network-based mobile teaching, optimizing teaching process and teaching structure, re-integrating teaching resources on the basis of the original teaching practice, and giving new experience to every link of pre-class learning-in-class teaching-after-class development in the concrete teaching reform practice, so as to release the energy of teaching and learning to the maximum extent. This study focuses on learning affective strategies and teaching content organization strategies, which not only lays a foundation for further research and teaching practice in the future, but also improves students' practical English application ability.

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