

The Action Research of Intercultural Communication Competence with Efficient Online Teaching Design

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Abstract

This research adopts the way of online teaching to cultivate students' intercultural communication competence. Through the student-centered teaching design, it sets up teaching objectives that meet students' needs, reconstructs teaching contents, opens up learning channels, constructs teaching processes and methods, and diversifies teaching evaluation and feedback, and implements online teaching under the guidance of POA and BOPPPS theory. With the realization of high participation and efficient teaching output, students' intercultural communication competence has been significantly improved.

Keywords

Online Teaching; Intercultural Communication Competence; Action Research.

1. Introduction

Intercultural communication competence is becoming more and more important in the era of frequent interaction. In order to cultivate this ability effectively, teachers have made many explorations in language teaching design, such as teaching the target language culture knowledge, strengthening cultural analysis and comparison, and integrating the cultivation of intercultural communication competence into language teaching.(Hu Wenzhong,2006) However, the effect of these attempts and innovations is not ideal. Students still have the problems of blind learning, learning but not using, using but not appropriate. The reason may be that these teaching designs are all teacher centered, students' initiative, participation and enthusiasm can not be concerned. So how to take students as the center, truly meet the needs of students, carry out high participation in classroom learning, and then obtain efficient output, has become an urgent problem to be solved in the current intercultural communication competence training.

The traditional language teaching is mainly based on the teaching materials, the learning content is out of date and can't meet the needs of students; large class teaching is the main way, students get less opportunities to participate, teachers are the center, students lack practice and interaction, and efficient output can't be achieved.(Xu Lisheng, 2000) During the coronavirus period, the full implementation of online courses has brought new ways for teachers to solve problems. Through careful design of online teaching, teachers can establish teaching objectives that meet the needs of students; reconstruct teaching content and explore learning channels; structure teaching process and methods; diversify teaching evaluation and feedback, which is likely to achieve efficient achievement of intercultural communication competence.

2. Intercultural Communication Competence

To cultivate intercultural communication competence, we should first define this concept. After years of debate, scholars have formed a more consistent view that intercultural communication ability is the ability to accurately and appropriately complete tasks and achieve communication goals when communicating with different cultures. In terms of its specific classification, Byram is adopted. One of the reasons is Byram It summarizes the practical experience of its theory in China, perfects it, and adds the oriental perspective, including empathy, adaptation, tolerance, etc., which is a classification method suitable for the characteristics of Chinese students; secondly, it emphasizes the importance of critical cross-cultural awareness, which is considered by Gao Yihong (2002) as "the most profound part of intercultural communication competence"; thirdly, the theory is widely used in many researches. After repeated verification, the intercultural communicative competence scale designed on the basis of this theory has good reliability and validity. Byram (2012) divides the elements of intercultural communication competence into four dimensions: knowledge, attitude, skill and consciousness. Knowledge refers to the understanding and mastery of national and target language countries' knowledge and cultural regulations. Attitude refers to a positive attitude of respect, openness, curiosity, optimism, acceptance and tolerance towards the target language. Skill refers to the ability of communicators to achieve communicative goals by using linguistic and non-verbal strategies in specific situations. Consciousness is a kind of criticism on the basis of respect for differences, the consciousness of distinguishing and dialectically evaluating national culture and target culture. Byram not only divides four aspects, but also conducts intercultural communication teaching on this basis. He believes that the cultivation of intercultural communication competence should not be separated from language teaching, but also be carried out in language teaching.

3. The Action Research

The research of online teaching design adopts the method of action research. Because this method is the most appropriate embodiment of "bottom-up" teaching reform and teaching reflection. Firstly, action research is a research model applied to social science proposed by social psychologists Coller and Lewin (1948). Its basic idea is "research for action, research by actors, research in action". With the rapid development of education, action research has been widely used in the field of education and teaching. Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) summed up the research results of learners and defined action research as a research mode in which the practical educators use various research methods and technologies in accordance with certain operating procedures in a natural and real education environment to solve practical problems in education. Nunan (1990) thinks that the basic characteristic of the classroom is to take the classroom as a laboratory. Teachers are both professors and researchers. In teaching practice, teachers find problems, verify theories, improve teaching, and make rational understanding and correct evaluation of their own work process. Ferrance (2000) summed up its basic operation steps as follows: finding problems, collecting data, analyzing data, conducting actions and reflecting and summarizing 5 steps.

4. Online Teaching Design

4.1. Problems in Teaching

For many years, there are many problems in the cultivation of Teacher centered intercultural communication ability. First, the teaching goal is not clear, the purpose of students' language learning is still to pass the CET-4 and CET-6, but the application of intercultural communication ability is lack of understanding. (Chang Xiaomei; Zhao Yushan, 2012) Second, cultural

knowledge is old, shallow and piled up. The cultural knowledge of other countries is relatively old, and the development of today's attention is not enough; and most of them are superficial knowledge, lack of profound cultural connotation analysis; the arrangement of cultural knowledge is mostly the accumulation of knowledge, without systematic combing, students can not form a structured knowledge system.(Han Xiaohui, 2014) Thirdly, knowledge input can not be transformed into capability output. Students lack of classroom participation and ability training, so they can not use it flexibly in real communication and complete communication tasks. Fourth, the evaluation method is single, often using the final exam, or simple question and answer, unable to measure the cultural sensitivity, cross-cultural awareness and other very important emotional factors in communication.

4.2. Data Collection and Analysis

In order to verify the above problems, a cross-cultural communicative competence test was conducted among 80 first-year undergraduates in a university in Liaoning Province. Through the way of independent course selection, the subjects formed three natural classes with a total number of 80. The students come from different majors, but they have received a complete English education for half a year. Byram's classification mode is adopted in the test, which is measured according to Yang Yang's cultural knowledge test scale (2009), Wang Zhenya's social knowledge test scale (1990) and Wu Weiping's self-test scale of Chinese college students' intercultural competence (2013). For more specific implementation process, please refer to the previous paper "cross-cultural communication ability survey of non-English majors". The results show that, firstly, the students do not have enough understanding of the purpose of intercultural communication ability, and they do not understand the needs of professional and social fields for this ability. Second, students think that the content of cultural materials is complex, and they can't sort out the structure and key points, and they don't know how to start learning. Third, students are biased against heterogeneous culture and lack of analysis and understanding of connotation. Fourth, students lack of opportunities and situations to practice their intercultural communication competence, which limits their ability improvement.

4.3. The Implementation of Teaching Design

In order to solve the problems in teaching, this study uses the opportunity of online teaching to design an efficient online teaching mode, and put it into practice, in order to carry out a student-centered online foreign language teaching with high participation and efficient output, so as to provide a reference for foreign language teachers.

The teaching mode of this study is based on Wen Qiufang's POA theory. Professor Wen Qiufang (2015) pointed out in the paper "building the theoretical system of" output oriented approach "that the system includes teaching concept, teaching hypothesis and teaching process with teachers as the intermediary. The teaching idea includes "Learning Center Theory", "Study Center Theory" and "Whole Person Education Theory"; the teaching hypothesis includes "output driving", "input facilitating" and "selective learning"; the teaching process consists of three stages of "motivating", "enabling" and "assessing". In the whole process, teachers should properly play an intermediary role to promote student-centered learning. Teaching idea is the guiding ideology of the other two parts, teaching hypothesis is the theoretical support of teaching process, and teaching process is the realization way of teaching idea and teaching hypothesis. In addition to the top-level design guided by Professor Wen Qiufang's POA theory, the specific teaching process is also used in Canada's BOPPPS model. The specific teaching process is divided into six aspects: bridge-in, objective, pre-testing, participatory learning, post-testing, summary.

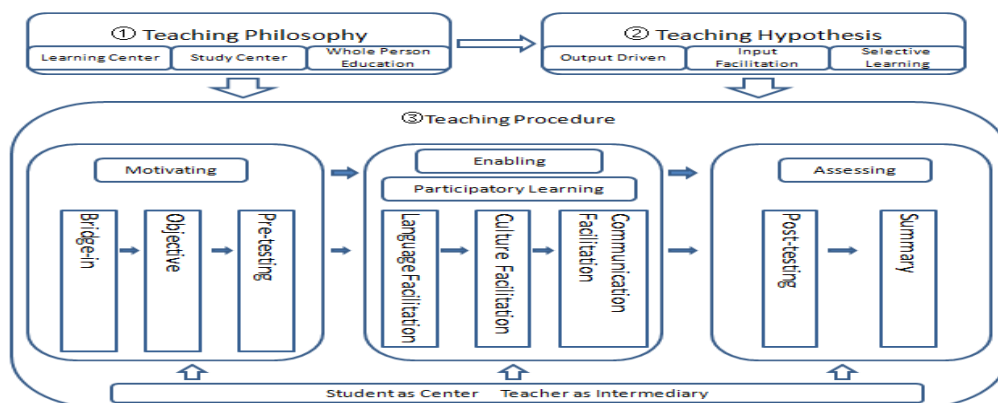


Figure 1. The Teaching Model Coming from POA and BOPPPS

In the Motivating phase, we first give the total tasks of unit output, which are difficult for our students at present. We hope that students can recognize the gap and make up the gap through learning. Then the total task is divided into two sub tasks to reduce the difficulty and build a ladder to help students complete the output. The setting of learning tasks fully pays attention to the future work and learning needs of students. Here are some learning tasks. For example, help your American landlord's 5-year-old daughter write a birthday invitation card; if you want to recommend Chinese houses to a family of four in the UK, how would you recommend them; if you are a home intelligent product developer, how would you recommend products and obtain international investment; please record an English video to briefly introduce the implementation of garbage classification in Shanghai, China. In the Enabling stage, teachers set up scaffolding for students through online courses and provide input in language, culture, communication and other aspects. Then guide the students to carry out selective learning, and sort out the audio-visual, reading and other input materials from three aspects: vocabulary, discourse, and imperial use. In this process, teachers consciously gradually reduce the role of their own scaffolding, and gradually improve students' sense of learning responsibility. There have been eight cultural packages for western culture and eight for Chinese culture. In the Assessing stage, teachers test and evaluate the learning effect of students' selective learning and output task practice process. First of all, teachers and students learn the evaluation criteria together, then evaluate the output results submitted by students in the classroom together, and then arrange students to conduct peer evaluation and self-evaluation under the evaluation criteria after class. Finally, the overall evaluation is carried out by teachers.

The teaching is completely completed online, which is divided into online autonomous learning and online classroom learning. Three online platform are used: Learning Through, DingDing and QQ. In the Learning Through, there is a course with perfect system, students can learn through teaching material channel, courseware channel, video channel, exercise channel and discussion channel, and can complete many learning activities including pre class preview, class attendance, homework submission, video explanation, interactive discussion, examination paper evaluation and learning reflection. DingDing provides students with interactive classroom activities. Students can interact with teachers and discussing with each other. Classroom activities include, students report their achievements; students prepare questions to discuss with each other and find solutions; teachers answer students' questions through comments. QQ provides the most basic communication platform, which can not only be used for sending messages, but also for personalized communication to solve scattered problems. The joint use of the three platforms ensures smooth communication and orderly and effective learning.

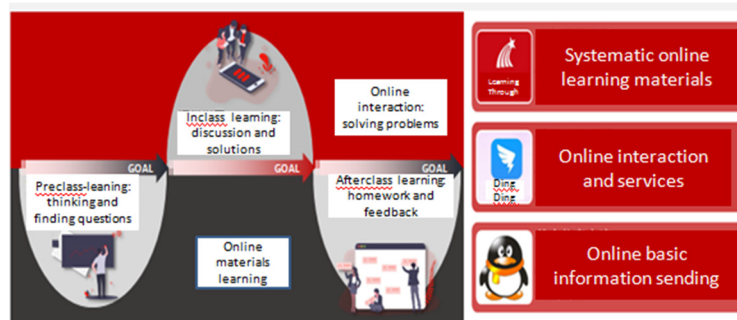


Figure 2. Online Learning and Teaching Tools

This paper takes Unit 6 of The New Generation of College English Audio-visual Oral Course 1 (Improvement Edition) as an example to illustrate the teaching process.

Session 1 (2 periods):

Pre class: 1. Online course: *U-compus, The Sixth Unit of the New Generation of College English Audio-visual Course 1, iprepare, listening skills*, a preliminary explanation of voice, vocabulary, grammar and theme.

2. Online interaction: teachers and students discuss and answer questions about key and difficult points in online courses.

3. Provide students with teaching materials for audio-visual reading and preliminary understanding of scientific and technological development. Resources include:

China's science and technology documentary,

Forget shopping. Soon you'll download your new clothes --- Danit Peleg

4. Assign unit tasks: give an English speech.

In class: 1. Explain listening skills, be able to identify positive and negative expressions in the context, and summarize the logical structure of the speech.

2. Guide students to deeply understand the listening materials, summarize the viewpoints in the materials, and sort out the logical structure of the speech.

3. Analyze the viewpoints in the materials in the way of group cooperation, think deeply about the relationship between science and technology and human beings, carry out dialectical analysis, and organize the speech outline according to the viewpoints.

4. Assign students to complete a draft of the speech, with clear views and strong arguments.

After class: students submit a speech (online submission)

Session 2 (2 periods):

Pre class: 1. The teacher evaluates the speech submitted by the students before class (online evaluation)

2. Watch the Ted speech, and further learn the vocabulary expression, text structure and demonstration methods of the speech.

The virtual lab will revolutionize science class---Michael Bodkaer

In class: 1. Through sample analysis to evaluate students' drafts, teachers' evaluation and students' mutual evaluation are combined.

2. Point out the shortcomings in the student's first draft, introduce the explanation of speech structure and text expression.

3. Work in groups to find useful expressions in the speech provided before class.

4. The teacher deeply explains the structure of the speech, explains the vocabulary, sentence structure and layout skills when establishing the viewpoint of the speech, explaining the reasons and giving examples.

5. Arrange students to revise a speech, form a logical and complete speech, and give practical examples in Chinese social life.

After class: students submit two draft speeches. (online submission)

Session 3 (2 periods):

Pre class: 1. Teachers evaluate the second draft submitted by students before class (online evaluation)

2. Watch Ted speech, analyze and appreciate speech skills and performance in depth.

Future tech will give you the benefits of city life anywhere---Tom Gruber

In class: 1. Through sample analysis to evaluate the second draft of students, teachers' evaluation and students' mutual evaluation are combined.

2. Students complete the presentation in groups.

3. Students discuss and evaluate each other, not only to give feedback on language learning, but also to understand the spirit of science and the development of science and technology in China.

4. Teachers evaluate the language, content and stage performance of students' speeches in class according to the evaluation criteria.

After class: after listening to the teacher's evaluation and peer evaluation, students make self-evaluation on their second draft and final performance of the speech, then record the video and upload it to the learning platform. Teachers evaluate and summarize.

5. The Evaluation of Teaching

During the epidemic period, after one semester of teaching, it is necessary to evaluate the improvement of intercultural communication competence. This assessment includes four aspects. First, use the scale to evaluate students' intercultural communication ability, and compare the front and back tests. Second, record the completion of the general course and the participation and interaction in the nail class. Third, evaluate the students' learning log and homework. Fourth, arrange an online cross-cultural communication activity to evaluate students' performance.

Table 1. The pre-testing and post-testing of intercultural communication competence

Variables		Subjects (N=80) [⊖]	
		Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-testing	Knowledge	30.25 [⊖]	3.97 [⊖]
	Attitude	19.01 [⊖]	2.03 [⊖]
	Skill	26.93 [⊖]	3.28 [⊖]
	Awareness	22.32 [⊖]	5.62 [⊖]
Post-testing	Knowledge	48.67 [⊖]	0.33 [⊖]
	Attitude	36.23 [⊖]	0.95 [⊖]
	Skill	55.38 [⊖]	1.02 [⊖]
	Awareness	35.79 [⊖]	0.97 [⊖]

Through the comparison of the front and back tests, it shows that the students' intercultural communication competence has greatly improved in the four dimensions of knowledge, attitude, skills and consciousness, but the concrete embodiment is different. Through the specific analysis of students' online performance, simulated reality, learning log and homework, it is found that: in terms of knowledge dimension, students have a deeper understanding of the connotation of foreign culture, are more familiar with and understand the English expression of Chinese culture, the introduction and analysis of the comparative part of Chinese and Western culture in online resources have the highest click rate, and students say "Comparison of Chinese and Western culture in the learning log It broadens my vision so that I can see the unified problem from multiple perspectives"; on the dimension of attitude, students have a

positive attitude of respect and tolerance towards heterogeneous culture, and take the way of inquiry and investigation first for the problems they don't understand, while delaying the evaluation and conclusion, which is reflected by most students in their communication simulation activities; on the dimension of skill, students dare to talk, be willing to talk, be brave to learn from others, and show positive communication willingness and flexible communication strategies in communication simulation activities; in the dimension of consciousness, students are more willing to understand current affairs, such as paying attention to Huawei's influence in the world, and can see imported products and domestic brands in a critical perspective, not worshipping foreign countries and fawning foreign countries, and not blindly arrogant. Students' homework elaborated and expressed their objective position.

6. The Reflection on Teaching Design

The method of questionnaire is adopted in the reflection, and the difficulties encountered by students and teachers in the implementation of the teaching design and the suggestions for teaching improvement are investigated. 92% of the students in the survey are satisfied with the teaching design, but some suggestions are put forward:

First, goal setting. Each class goal is not easy to be too many, and the expression is simple and easy to understand. One goal and one sentence are helpful for students to grasp the key points and check whether the goal has been achieved.

Second, teaching content. The content of self-study should be more systematic. The content classification is helpful for students to self-study and form a systematic knowledge system. The teaching content should balance classic and frontier, knowledge and ability, teaching and training, depth and breadth, universality and personality.

Third, the teaching process. The teaching process can be carried out in the way of question chain, step by step, deepening the depth of thinking, and helping students to achieve high output from a low starting point. To make students learn and interesting, learn and think, learn and use, learn and have rope. Take various forms of interaction, such as teacher-student interaction, group interaction, group interaction, to achieve full coverage of interaction, increase the number and time of individual student interaction.

Fourth, evaluation feedback. In teaching, various evaluation methods are adopted, such as design of evaluation topics such as practice instead of lecture, case review, discussion and debate, project exploration, teacher guide student performance, etc., to evaluate students' performance in multiple aspects and channels.

7. Conclusion

This study is a new attempt to cultivate intercultural communication ability through online teaching. Through the design and implementation of teaching, it is found that students' intercultural communication ability has been greatly improved. However, due to the short online teaching time and small number of samples, more extensive research and analysis are needed in the future.

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