

Present Development and Research on Improving Countermeasures for Blended-teaching Model in Institutions of Higher Learning

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Abstract: Blended-teaching model is an “online” + “offline” teaching model which combines the advantages of online and traditional teaching models. This model focuses more on students’ learning experience, and is more inclined to organize and realize teaching objectives from the students’ perspective, and creates a truly highly-participated and personalized learning experience for them. Based on the definition and characteristics of blended-teaching model, and the current fact that institutions of higher learning have been trying to use blended-teaching, this research raises implementing strategy on two perspectives which are: construct a teaching management mechanism of blended-teaching model; and improves teaching management system of blended-teaching model.

1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, “internet + education” has put more and more influence on higher education. Institutions of higher learning have been impacted and challenged in different aspects like teaching management mechanism and system, personnel training and education resource construction. It has been a heat discussion and an actively trying option to carry out a developing innovation by using big data technologies based on internet platform for constructing a blended-teaching model in institutions of higher learning. Many institutions of higher learning have started such works and have accumulated certain experience on the subject. We can say that at present such education and teaching model, which are based on such structure and information technologies and fit in learning interests of modern college students, have been widely promoted and consistently improved. But most of the institutions still can’t get rid of a construction misconception which is prioritizing hardware but neglecting software. There are still many problems to be solved as the blended-teaching model is still quite immature.

2. Concept and Characteristics Analysis of Blended-Teaching Model

2.1. The Concept of Blended-Teaching Model

Currently there are many arguments regarding the recognition of blended-teaching model, such as: “blended-teaching model is to combine the advantages of the traditional learning methods along with digital or online leaning”^[1], and “blended-teaching model includes deep level interaction and fusion of a variety of teaching strategies”.^[2] The most commonly seen statement would be: “the blend of online learning and face-to-face teaching”, includes two dimensions as physical characteristics and teaching characteristics. Physical characteristics are demonstrated in the way where the teaching format transfers from traditional classes to a combination of mobile technology and online teaching/face-to-face teaching. Teaching dimension shows in the way where teaching focus changes from teachers in traditional classes to students’ learning. Especially for blended-teaching model, it emphasizes more on students’ learning experience, and more inclines to organize and realize teaching objectives from students’ perspective. Although the expressions on blended-teaching are different, but we have reasons to believe that, the concept of blended-teaching model is

an “online” + “offline” teaching model which combines the advantages of online and traditional teaching model. This model focuses more on students’ learning experience, and is more inclined to organize and realize teaching objectives from the students’ perspective, and creates a truly highly-participated and personalized learning experience for them.

2.2. Characteristics Analysis of Blended-Teaching Model

Along with the further development of blended-teaching model, from the students’ point of view, this new teaching model has been commonly accepted after further understanding and examination. Researchers and organizers of teaching activities have started to pay attention to the changes that blended-teaching model has brought to students, and focus more on the support to students’ learning. Blended-teaching model is not a simple technical mix, but to create a truly highly-participated and personalized learning experience for them. Its focusing point is “put students as the center”, and to achieve a blend in teaching and tutorial under this concept and environment. Therefore, the characteristics of blended-teaching model can be summarized into “five blendings”: “blending of curriculum platform functions, blending of online resource construction, blending of students’ learning method, blending of teaching process, and blending of assessment methods.”.

3. Present Development and Issues in the Application of Blending-teaching Model in Institutions of Higher Learning

3.1. Current Application Status

It is already a fact that blended-teaching has been commonly recognized to have meaning and influence in both innovating traditional teaching model as well as improving personnel training quality in educational circles especially higher educational circle. This leads to a rising trend from the exploration and research theory of blended-teaching model, to an active trying on practice of blended-teaching model. For example, teaching format which blends learning and flipped classroom; teaching format which blends learning and cloud classes; teaching format which blends format and MOOC; teaching format which blends learning and public Wechat platform. These can also be categorized into three kinds as traditional blended teaching, blended online teaching and blended synchronized teaching. One of the actively reference research results from the concept is the researching result from exploration on blended personnel training of adult education by East China University of Science and Technology. The practices they raised include: develop student remote learning platform, teacher platform and teaching management platform, and has built up almost 90 remote video classes where offers abundant and personalized study platform; implement credit system, and offer flexible learning period of schooling; carry out new life-long credit model called “credit bank”; meet with social requirements, reform class system. We can say that seeing from the practical results of blended teaching model, however the implementing format is, they all demonstrate an improving effect on students’ learning enthusiasm and efficiency, and could be a learning model that has consistent developing potentials.

3.2. Existing Issues

Current experience on the application of blended-teaching model in the institutions of higher learning is still immature. It does not only show in the lack of exploration and understanding in the true meaning of such teaching model, and the lack of required qualifications from teachers that can match with the teaching method., but also shows more in the following issues from teaching models: first, the confirmed transforming classes under the new teaching methods are lack of scientific standard and systematic planning; secondly, teaching plan arrangement under new teaching method is lack of top-down design, and is needed to be improved systematically and scientifically; thirdly, the teacher capability on new teaching model is not balanced, and the skill training on new teaching model reform is yet to be enhanced; fourthly, the calculation standard on working quantity of new teaching model, and the pension standard of class fee still need document support; fifthly, the quality assessment and policy stimulation for new teaching model is yet to be improved.

4. Two Improving Countermeasures for Institutions of Higher Learning in Application of Blended-teaching Model

4.1. Construct a Teaching Management Mechanism of Blended-Teaching Model

The exploration and attempt on blended-teaching model from institutions of higher learnings should change from personal exploration, personal application and individual scattering to a teaching management mechanism on structural blended-teaching model, as well as good implementation and management of adopted blended-teaching model on three aspects: enforce top-down design, enhance mesomanagement, and improve educational practice. Any teaching model is composed of multiple factors. The objective is to mobilize teachers' enthusiasm on transformation of education in order to offer favorable conditions to teachers on teaching research; guarantee success of teaching activities, improve teaching quality and professional construction level. Blended teaching model also requires a reasonable supply and effective support of all factors. In order to push the education management mechanism of blended-teaching model, schools should make standard on all relevant parties from individuals to departments including management staff, teachers, students, technical support staff, as well as office of teaching affairs, teacher development center, education technology center and internet center etc. Schools should also use principle and method of managing science and instruction theory, fully elaborate the managing function of class constructing plan; organize, coordinate and control on new teaching model by teaching management departments, to coordinate all factors of blended-teaching model, make it orderly operate and improve efficiency, so that the four links, which refers to teaching planning management, process management, business management and monitor management, can be effectively managed. In this way, the institutions of higher learning can reconstruct a new teaching model management mechanism that fit in the requirements of educational reforming development, and finally form a effectively operating mechanism on blended-teaching model.

4.2. Improves Teaching Management System of Blended-Teaching Model

In order to bind teaching management practice of institutions of higher learnings, and gradually improve new teaching model management mechanism, we should reasonably set class reform objectives of new teaching models, actively stimulate the enthusiasm of teachers on transformation of education, actively explore a new teaching model that fits into the personnel training requirements, fully develop new training on teaching methods, feasibly arrange teaching time on new teaching model, make good experience communication of new teaching class reform, revise relevant system and inspiring policy of new teaching model reform, make excellent education quality monitor and evaluation on new teaching model. Some researchers suggest four countermeasures as references which are "change evaluation, expand guarantee, modify examination, and strengthen rewards". To be specific, it means to assess the blended-teaching model based on three links on class design, classroom organization and online teaching; adopt new methods on transformed classed and class fee as teaching support; provide reward to teachers and subjects that are outstanding in the curriculum reform.

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