

Research on cross-cultural teaching reform of college English based on BOPPPS teaching model

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Abstract: In today's globalized world, we are in the era of multicultural digital economy where advanced modern communication technology has greatly reduced the distance between people, making cross-cultural communication the norm. In higher vocational colleges, cultivating students' cross-cultural communication abilities has become an important part of research on the reform of college English cross-cultural teaching. The BOPPPS teaching model is an advanced and effective teaching model that not only allows students to play a leading role through active participation and interaction, thereby developing their autonomous abilities, but also serves as a good guiding principle with teachers as the core. The teaching philosophy of the BOPPPS model emphasizes a shift from the traditional teacher-centered teaching model to a new student-centered teaching model that enhances the teacher's role. This study aims to integrate BOPPPS teaching model design into cross-cultural teaching activities of college English, so that learners can fully exercise their initiative through participatory learning and at the same time, the teacher's leading role can be reflected through the achievement of learning objectives and interactive classroom teaching.

Key words: BOPPPS teaching model; college English; cross-cultural teaching; reform research

1 Introduction

Since the 1980s, research on learner autonomy in foreign language learning has continuously deepened. Researchers have noted that while autonomous learning poses challenges to the traditional teacher-centered teaching model to some extent, this does not mean that the subjective initiative of teachers should be weakened. On the contrary, the importance of the teacher's guiding role cannot be ignored; it is a prerequisite for learners' autonomous learning. In autonomous learning models, teachers act as facilitators and advisors, helping with teaching activities, teaching control, and stimulating learners' interests and emotional exchanges through various teaching methods. Therefore, teachers still play a decisive role in promoting learners' autonomous learning. Introducing the BOPPPS teaching model into cross-cultural teaching of college English can not only enhance students' self-learning abilities, oral expression skills, and text organization abilities, but also improve their intercultural sensitivity and awareness, prompting students to communicate with people from different cultural orientations with a more inclusive mindset, a broader perspective, and a deeper understanding. Students not only become masters of knowledge but also gain more important independent learning skills that will benefit them for a lifetime.

2 Concept of the BOPPPS model

The BOPPPS teaching model was originally promoted by the Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) in Canada as a

course design model that integrates teaching practice and theory, characterized by being "student-centered with teacher guidance" [1]. This model has now been adopted and esteemed by various countries, universities, and industrial training institutions around the world. Currently, domestic institutions have started to introduce the "BOPPPS" teaching model into practical teaching, but more often it is based on experiential summaries combined with actual courses. This model serves as a tool that helps teachers decompose and analyze the teaching process, identify blind spots in teaching, and improve and enhance teaching effectiveness. In 2021, the Ministry of Education issued the "English Curriculum Standards for Higher Vocational Education", which clearly stated that the English curriculum for higher vocational education is an organic part of the curriculum system for higher vocational education and is a public foundational course that all professional students must take or select. It combines both instrumental and humanistic elements. It fully illustrates that college English teaching must incorporate humanistic aspects, mainly reflected through cross-cultural teaching. However, most of the English teaching theories introduced domestically have not been closely integrated with the actual English teaching in China, which cannot fundamentally guide the practical English teaching in the country. This is especially true for the theoretical guidance that combines cross-cultural teaching content with traditional Chinese cultural knowledge, which is extremely scarce. Moreover, in the planning of courses, compilation of teaching materials, and setting of assessment standards, there often lacks scientific theoretical guidance. By reviewing various English teaching documents and syllabi issued by the Ministry of Education in recent years, it can be found that there has been little systematic discussion on the standards, content, methods, and evaluation of cultural teaching in English classes. Without the constraints of a syllabus and systematic theoretical guidance, some teachers merely add traditional Chinese cultural knowledge into the teaching of English language knowledge based on their own understanding and judgment, which results in a disconnection between language knowledge and cultural knowledge. The teaching content appears abrupt, and students may not understand the rationale during lessons, failing to achieve the goals of cross-cultural teaching and effectively complete cross-cultural communication tasks. Integrating the BOPPPS teaching model into English courses that focus on cross-cultural communication can not only reform the traditional teaching model, but also enhance the innovation, theoretical basis, openness, and practicality of the course design of cross-cultural communication English through various classroom activities based on the six stages of BOPPPS, thereby strengthening students' autonomous learning abilities and research and analysis skills, and cultivating students' intercultural communication abilities. The specific significance and main tasks of these six stages are as follows:

The BOPPPS teaching model is divided into six stages: bridge-in, objective, pre-assessment, participatory learning, post-assessment, and summary [2].

1. Bridge-in is the first stage, where the prepared pre-class materials and course content are incorporated to stimulate students' interest and focus their attention on the upcoming course content. Teachers can introduce the course by sharing cases or stories related to the course content to capture students' attention, and then pose some questions related to the theme to guide students' active thinking, allowing them to connect previously learned content with upcoming learning, thereby stimulating their learning motivation. The teaching strategies in this stage include introducing the course objectives, summarizing the importance of the course content, and guiding students' thinking on related topics.

2. Objective is the second stage, where teachers must clarify the content of their teaching and the learning objectives for students, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills. In the teaching process, only by letting students understand their learning objectives, clarify the main content of their learning, understand the expected outcomes, and recognize their transformed learning abilities can we cultivate students' autonomous learning capabilities and further their desire for knowledge acquisition.

3. Pre-assessment is the third stage, aimed at allowing teachers to understand students' learning situation through assessments such as tests, homework, and informal Q&A. Based on the test results, teachers can determine the extent and scope of students' mastery of knowledge, their learning abilities, and interests. This information serves as a basis for adjusting the depth and speed of the learning content, enabling students to better adapt to the teacher's instruction and master the knowledge being taught. Moreover, students may clarify their learning goals through this assessment and strive to achieve them.

4. Participatory learning is the fourth stage, where teachers pose thought-provoking questions related to the lecture theme and guide students in group discussions. During these discussions, students are encouraged to participate actively, which mainly involves interaction between teachers and students as well as peer interaction.

5. Post-assessment is the fifth stage, where teachers use various evaluation methods such as evaluation forms, competency assessments, and student-designed project displays to evaluate whether the teaching objectives have been achieved, whether students have mastered the knowledge, and whether their practical application abilities have improved. Based on the evaluation results, teachers make appropriate adjustments to their teaching methods. Different evaluation methods are employed to assess different dimensions and aspects of the content, and the assessment methods may be influenced by changes in the course content.

6. Summary is the sixth and final stage, where teachers reflect on the implementation of the previous five stages and summarize the teaching content. This includes distilling key points of knowledge, analyzing difficult and important aspects, assigning homework or post-class activities, and organizing students in advance to preview the new content for the next class. Teachers carefully review students' post-class tasks and timely grasp their completion status and feedback results, often employing encouragement-based education to stimulate intrinsic motivation of students at varying learning levels and enhance their interest in learning.

3 Design and application of the cross-cultural communication English course based on the BOPPPS model

In cross-cultural teaching, the BOPPPS teaching model is integrated into the classroom. Teachers promote students' awareness of independent learning and cultivate their cross-cultural communication abilities, as well as stimulate students' interest in learning and emotional exchange through teaching design, teaching regulation, and teaching activities. To effectively incorporate the philosophy of the BOPPPS model into cross-cultural teaching and enhance students' autonomous learning abilities while strengthening classroom teaching effectiveness, our project team has designed the entire teaching activity based on the six stages of BOPPPS to include the following activities: theme lecture, workshop, and practice and survey [3].

3.1 Theme lecture

It is a teaching design that explores content based on the course text. The target audience for the lecture is all students, and the primary focus is to ensure that the content delivered by the teacher captivates students' interest, motivating them to listen to the entire content and gain insights. Following this, the teacher clarifies the learning content based on the teaching objectives, collects students' questions and opinions to understand their foundations and interests, organizes and summarizes students' feedback, and guides them to actively participate in exploration and discovery, ultimately determining the theme. While reading the text, students think independently and engage in exchanges, sifting out valuable key points through the collision of ideas, and condensing the key content into broader topics. This design not only clarifies students' learning objectives and focuses the learning content but also ensures the leading role of the teacher as a guide and companion through the process of guiding, organizing, and determining the theme. Taking "Understanding Cultural

Differences" as an example, the teacher might introduce the course theme by playing movie clips that reflect cultural differences between the East and the West, thereby attracting students' interest, such as a debate scene in the film *The Gua Sha Treatment* about who would win between Sun Wukong and Spider-Man. The two different heroic figures are rooted in distinct cultural backgrounds, with Sun Wukong being a well-known and beloved hero in Chinese culture, while Spider-Man is a famous hero in Western culture. Thus, the understanding of these two renowned heroic figures differs drastically between Eastern and Western cultures. The teacher can use the cultural differences in the understanding of Sun Wukong's character to introduce the learning objectives and content. By asking questions, the teacher assesses whether students are aware that Sun Wukong has a different image in the context of Western culture. Students initiate discussions, reflection, and exchanges on this cultural difference, prompting the topic and distilling the theme under teacher's guidance: "Understanding Cultural Differences in Four Stages". This method of thematic teaching truly embodies a problem-oriented, student-centered approach with the teacher serving as the guide.

3.2 Workshop

As an interactive teaching method, this new teaching model emphasizes student-centered while leveraging teacher's role according to the teaching philosophy of the BOPPPS model. One important aspect is participatory learning. Workshops actively promote and strengthen interaction between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves, allowing students to fully engage in participatory learning. During the workshop, teachers can initiate discussions on topics such as thematic research and case studies, dividing the entire class into smaller groups to collaborate on research tasks. For thematic research, students are required to independently read and collect relevant materials based on the topic from the theme lecture, and apply the knowledge acquired to solve problems through open discussions in their groups, ultimately creating a PowerPoint presentation to showcase their findings in class. For instance, in the "Generalization and Cultural Schemata" lesson, students compared Disney's "Mulan" with the legendary Mulan from Chinese folklore, analyze cultural schemata issues through the character's image and personality, elements of Chinese Kung Fu, and the Chinese dragon. Workshops allow group members to fully utilize their independent learning capabilities, collect reference materials based on research tasks, and engage in active discussions to write related research reports, which are then presented in class via PowerPoint. Other students can ask questions on this topic, and engage in open discussions with the presenters, while the teacher evaluates the research reports and PowerPoint presentations, points out areas of improvement and facilitates in-depth interactions with students on the presentation topics, while also supervising the discussion process. In addition to thematic research presentations, workshops can also conduct case analyses on issues encountered in cross-cultural communication. Cross-cultural communication, as a course designed to cultivate cross-cultural awareness and develop cross-cultural communication skills, requires the application of cross-cultural knowledge in practice. Case analysis, due to its vivid and concrete nature, as well as its practicality, allows students to start from analyzing real problems to develop critical independent thinking and application abilities. Generally speaking, the cases selected for seminars on intercultural communication should be combined with actual problems encountered in intercultural communication, such as the conflicts in family values between Chinese mothers-in-law and Western daughters-in-law, the unpleasantness between Chinese business delegations and Canadian companies at dinner parties, the differences in dining etiquette between Chinese and Western people, the issues of family ethics, social views, and the concept of "face" in the movie *The Joy Luck Club*, etc. Case analysis during the seminar allows students to connect theory with practice, which expands their thinking through discussion and analysis of problems, and enhances communication and interaction among students and between students and teachers, thereby cultivating students' English language skills and independent inquiry abilities.

3.3 Practice and survey

The last two stages of the BOPPPS teaching model are post-test and summary. Therefore, in the cross-cultural English education, in order to assess whether students have achieved the learning objectives, teachers can design corresponding surveys and practical activities. After completing the summary of teaching tasks and reflecting on the teaching process, teachers assign homework or practical assignments to students. The practical activities mainly involve students working in groups to choose activity themes and engage in social practice on cross-cultural communication through interactions with foreign teachers and international students, such as understanding their views on Chinese cuisine and their perspectives on social relations, and experiencing the cultural differences between the two sides. Survey research, as a purposeful and planned systematic activity, enables students to choose topics based on the knowledge learned in class, design research proposals, analyze and organize data, and draw research conclusions. Taking cultural diversity as an example, students can independently design questionnaires to investigate which elements are most important in friendships and compare the results with survey results from other countries; regarding cultural identity, students can conduct empirical research on the differences in family structure and wedding customs between the United States and China; or investigate cultural phenomena in society, such as studying the localization process of Pepsi in China and comparing the cultural differences reflected in conscription advertisements between China and the United States. During the survey research process, students can fully utilize the theoretical knowledge learned in class to explain phenomena or solve practical problems, and deepen their understanding of knowledge by writing investigation reports to analyze problems. Teachers guide students to master and understand the knowledge learned through the review of survey reports.

In the English teaching of vocational and technical colleges, it is not only essential to guide students to correctly understand the cultures of various countries around the world but also to emphasize the dissemination of Chinese culture. Through this project research, it is hoped to introduce the concept of designing teaching activities using the BOPPPS teaching model in cross-cultural teaching of college English, so as to cultivate students to possess an international perspective and inclusiveness. Based on a thorough understanding of various cultures, students will be able to objectively evaluate both local and foreign cultures, develop cultural observation and interpretation skills, as well as critical thinking abilities, ultimately applying knowledge to cross-cultural communication.

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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