

Research on Blended Teaching Methods of Foreign Trade English Correspondence Course in Digital Economy Era

Kebin Hou, Weilan Cui

Qingdao City University, Qingdao 266106, China.

Abstract: Facing the digital economy era, considerable attention is paid to the importance of understanding the fundamental impact on the information and development of blended teaching methods regarding the higher education. For this reason, the purpose of this study is to answer the challenges brought by the digital economy era, identify the effective teaching methods which would be used in English Correspondence course in the era of digital economy, aiming to form the patterns of learning, provide high motivation, strength and knowledge, and most importantly contribute to the complex competences of future working. For further research, it is expected to be able to prove that using the blended teaching methods will effectively improve students' communication skills and learning efficiency, enhance students' learning experience and critical thinking skills.

Keywords: Digital Economy Era; Business English; Teaching Methods

1. Introduction

The Business English major established in 2007 is a new major with unexpected rapidly growth in China. Under the influence of the current global economic integration, Business English not only has been widely applied in daily business life nowadays, but also in higher education. International trade business correspondence is one of the main course in this major. The communication content involved in the foreign trade English correspondence course is diverse, including establishment of business cooperative relations, inquiry, offer, quotation, contract signing, order, shipment, insurance, payment, claims and so on. International trade business correspondence plays an important communication role in the smooth development of cross-border trade activities. With the transformation of the society's information-based industrial economy entering into a knowledge-based economy dominated by information management, in the digital economy era, transnational trade cooperation and communication methods have begun to evolve into the models of digitization and informatization. The writing methods of foreign trade English correspondence has been changing accordingly. Meanwhile, the traditional teaching model has gradually changed in order to meet the needs of the job market. Teaching methods have become more diversified, and teaching is no longer limited to classrooms. From the perspective of foreign trade English correspondence course, this study is aiming to form a blended teaching mode combining traditional teaching mode with information technology, which will extend classroom teaching outward, cultivate the students more systematically and comprehensively, and effectively improve their English level, to meet the comprehensive development needs of students and the talent needs of current work requirements.

2. The development of English teaching mode in the era of digital economy

Digital technologies, typically represented by the Internet, big data, 5G, artificial intelligence, accelerate the deep integration with industries, bringing the world into the era of digital economy (Afonasova, Panfilova, Galichkina, Lusarczyk, 2019). It's at the forefront of development and provide substantial opportunities for different industries to accelerate financial growth and creating job vacancies. The digital economy era refers to the characteristics that individuals have the ability to freely transmit information and obtain information in a timely manner, which was difficult or even impossible in the past. With the development of the digital economy era

and Internet, the foreign trade industry which is closely connected with it has been changed subsequently. It has led to the emergence of large markets for internet network service and mobile communications. As a consequence, people who work in international trade business can communicate in a much easier way by online chat tools and mobile appliances. Consequently, the International trade business correspondence course, as the main course that teaches students how to communicate with their customers in global business environment, was facing the challenge of adapting the changing environment and the needs to ameliorate the teaching plan and teaching methods accordingly.

The development of the digital technology correlates with the dynamics of educational activities. Higher education particularly affects the development of the digital economy because it is a system training highly qualified personnel, conducting scientific research, and generating innovative ideas. As we mentioned earlier, the digital economy clearly demonstrates the need to change the teaching plan, the teaching methods in accordance with the changing trends. That's why we are developing the teaching methods towards blended teaching methods. How to organically integrate information technology into education teaching in order to care for learners' learning experience and promote the cultivation of new talents is an issue that current educational technology researchers need to pay great attention to. In order to promote the cultivation of students' communication ability, educators pay plentiful attention to improve students' learning experience.

2.1 Enriched teaching resources

In the era of information economy, the wide application of Internet and digital technology provides more abundant teaching resources for English teaching, such as online courses, digital teaching materials, multimedia teaching, etc. educators can use these resources to make English classroom more lively and interesting.

2.2 Changed teaching methods

In the era of information economy, traditional teaching methods can no longer meet the needs of students. Educators need to adopt more flexible and diversified teaching methods, such as project-based learning, cooperative learning, flipped classroom, etc., to better stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm in learning. Blended teaching has become a priority for educators.

2.3 Increase the role of educators

In the information economy era, the role of educators is no longer a simple knowledge imparter, they are needed as a student's instructor, guide, and curriculum assistant. educators need to adopt different teaching strategies and methods according to the actual situation of students to help students better master English knowledge and communication skills.

3. The effect of applying blended teaching methods in the foreign trade English correspondence course

Under the background of diversified and personalized network digital teaching methods and learning methods, college English teaching and learning urgently need a new teaching model and educational reform (Bi, 2019). Driscoll (2002) stated that "Blended teaching mode is an elevation of teaching ideas, which will change students' cognitive styles and educators' teaching methods and roles". In the traditional classroom teaching mode, the way for students to acquire knowledge mainly comes from books, textbooks and educators' own knowledge reserves. Under the influence of digital technology, educators are provided with more channels and resources to prepare teaching plans and improve teaching methods to achieve the synchronization of educational resources. In this process, we discover the advantages of adopting blended teaching methods.

Blended teaching can be recognized as blended learning which is determined by the analysis of students' needs, the teaching environment, and choice of the teaching facilities. With regard to the international trade business correspondence course, the use of modern teaching devices in the class, for example, multimedia which takes advantage of various types of learning materials: infographics, pictures, videos, tables, graphs, and more, is an irreplaceable advantage. By using this, we can not only enrich the content of the class but also increase the engagement of the students in the class actively, transfer the learning model from "listening" to "doing" and combined the conceptual theory with practical skills. Especially in the subject of foreign trade English correspondence, the rational use of computers, PPT, and other teaching equipment in the classroom can not only enhance the class forms but also

introduce the current hot topics, through different forms, arouse students' interest, improve students' learning enthusiasm.

In addition, the educator would be able to make use of a variety of resources to design the curriculum and make the teaching plan to deliver learning materials in a variety of situation. One of the most important benefits of using blended teaching methods is that it gives both educators and learners easy access to learning content which means it can effectively extend the classroom. It enhances the flexibility in terms of availability. The online platform and mobile appliance enables students to access the learning materials and educators to deliver support and instruction from anywhere at any time. In the business correspondence class, we mixed it with online class and offline class, students can prepare lessons before class and look over class materials and educators are able to provide extra support and give timely feedback through the online platform. What's more, by using digital technologies and online tools, we can gather data such as attendance, engagement and comprehension to analyze trends and learning outcomes. The online communication between peer students can also stimulate students' interest in English learning, improve learning enthusiasm, deepen their understanding of the course and get familiar with the contact way in real life.

4. Conclusion

The digital economy era provides numerous information and resources to enable innovative solutions for complex development challenges and help educators integrate theories with practice, and cultivate students' comprehensive abilities. The business correspondence course combines the diversified information technology means with the use of blended teaching methods to improve the efficiency and quality of communication skills and enhance students' learning enthusiasm. At present, blended teaching has become the mainstream informatization teaching mode. It can be concluded that using blended teaching methods results in many benefits, not only in students' learning but also in the educators' teaching quality.

References

- [1] Afonasyova MA, Panfilova EE, Galichkina MA, Lusarczyk B. Digitalization in economy and innovation: the effect on social and economic processes. *Polish J Manag Stud.* (2019) 19:22–32.
- [2] Bi DR. (2019). Main tasks, emphases, difficulties and breakthroughs of the university classroom revolution. *China Higher Education Research*, 6: 1-7.