

# Construction of moral education in college English with blended learning in the “internet+ era”

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**Abstract.** Moral education with blended learning is being heartedly discussed in college education. To foster students' virtue through education is an important task of higher education. College English, with a vast number of students, is the key field to complete the task. To better enhance efficiency of moral education, this paper proposes that blended learning be an efficient method to construct moral education in college English. The paper presents an introduction to moral education, literature review of moral education and blended learning, questionnaire and data analysis, and corresponding measurements of how to construct moral education with blended learning. The paper finds out that (1)blended learning is a beneficial teaching approach in moral education (2) 88.16% (380 Ss in total) understand the concept “moral education” (3)teaching models with blended learning should be constructed so as to put moral education into practice (4)measures need to be proposed to integrate moral education in college English teaching.

## 1 Introduction

Moral education, which is nearly equivalent to character education, is now being discussed heatedly and paid much attention to. For some scholars, moral education is regarded as political and ideological education in universities to cultivate students. In 2019, moral education was once again strengthened by President Xi Jinping, who said that moral education in political classes and other non-political classes should go hand in hand.

College English, a very important class with a number of students, is a nonnegligible field to put moral education into practice. The past decades have witnessed dramatic methodological changes of teaching in college English. Blended teaching, as an advanced hybrid teaching method, has been widely used in English classes. In the internet age, information technology has been widely used in teaching practice, lots of blended learning platforms has been developed, such as Chinese University Moocs, Rain-class, Chaoxing, Xuetang, Treenity, icourses, coursera, Edx and ocwc.

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This paper, with the help of information technology, integrated blended learning into moral education in college English and concentrated on strategies of constructing moral education in college English.

## **2 Literature review of blended learning and moral education**

### **2.1 Previous study on blended learning**

“The term blended learning is used to describe a solution that combines several different delivery methods, such as collaboration software, Web-based courses, EPSS, and knowledge management practices[1].” Blended learning has been studied for a long time at abroad, including definition, advantages and challenges, methods to implementing blended learning, blended learning in higher education, blended learning models[1], blended learning systems, comparative study of blended learning and e-learning, and evaluation of blended learning[2]. These studies are relatively comprehensive, which could be a reference for the future studies. However, there lack the combination of blended learning and moral education.

Domestic studies on blended learning also starts from an early age. As for the combination of blended learning and moral education, it mainly concentrated on methodologies or measures of integrating blended learning into moral education[3-4] and lacks of strategies on constructing moral education with blended learning.

Blended learning, a method that could help engage students in the whole process of learning, should be applied in moral education. This paper, with blended learning, proposes some measures to construct moral education in college English.

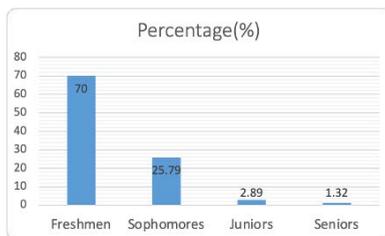
### **2.2 Previous study on moral education**

Compared with research on moral education abroad, studies in China starts from a relatively late time, yet with a broad researching perspective, which includes: methodologies to construct moral education system[5], elements of moral education analysis[6], textbooks of moral education[7-8], teaching abilities of moral education[9-10], connotation of moral education[11-13]. They mainly focus on qualitative discussions and lack of empirical ones.

Studies at abroad starts from an early age and they are more comprehensive as both the qualitative and quantitative studies were covered. Pamela Bolotin Joseph and Sara Efron[14] introduced William Bennett’s understanding of moral education. William Bennett thought that elements of moral education should include: self-discipline, compassion, responsibility, friendship, work, courage, perseverance, honesty, loyalty and faith. Le Page et al[15] did an empirical study on moral education to compare opinions on moral education of teachers from Turkey and America. These studies could be a reference for domestic studies on moral education construction.

## **3 Questionnaire and data analysis**

In the paper, 380 students in total, from freshmen to seniors, are covered in the questionnaire (see Figure 1). In majority of the universities, students who are non-English majors should study English in no more than two years. This is the reason why the questionnaire respondents in Figure 1 are mainly freshmen and sophomores.



**Fig. 1.** Students covering in the questionnaire (380 Ss in total).

**Table 1.** Questionnaire of moral education in English class.

Statements	Totally agree (%)	Agree. (%)	Disagree. (%)	No opinion. (%)
1. You know what is moral education.	30.79	57.37	11.84	0
2. Moral education is covered in your English class.	39.74	47.37	2.37	10.53
3. Moral education in English class is political education.	31.58	36.05	22.37	10
4. Moral education in English class may cover introduction to traditional culture, history, politics, economy, patriotism, values, psychology etc.	60.53	35.79	0.53	3.16
5. Students may share their understanding in the class to better improve the teaching effect of moral English.	47.37	42.11	6.05	4.47
6. Teachers' enhancement of themselves will better the teaching effect of moral English.	62.63	32.89	2.11	2.37
7. Blended teaching should be involved in the English class integrating with moral education.	62.89	33.95	1.05	2.11

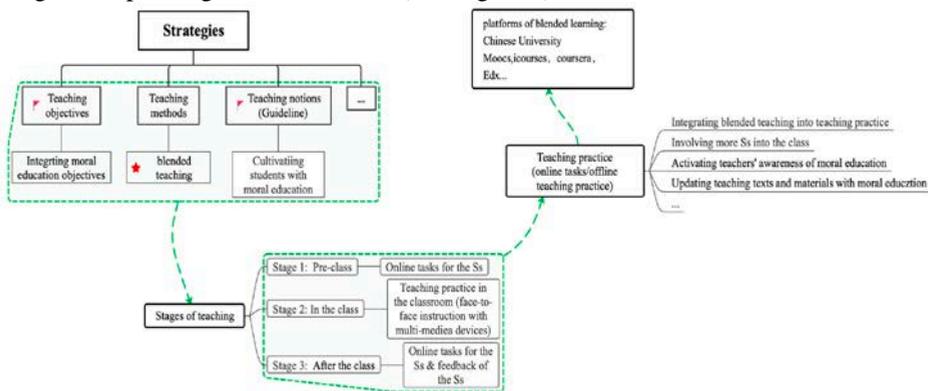
From the questionnaire, it's clear that most of the English classes cover moral education (87.11%). However, from the first statement and the third one, the survey found that there existed a paradox: 88.16% of the students thought they knew what is moral education, while 67.63 of them thought moral education is political education, which illustrated that not all of them know what is moral education.

From Statement Four and Five, the survey found that most of the students have their own expectation of moral education and they hoped to be involved in the class to improve the teaching effect. From Statement Six, it illustrated that teachers are very important elements in moral education. From the last statement, it showed that perfection of teaching approach is also expected by the students.

In conclusion, from Table One, the questionnaire survey found out that: (1) Students don't truly understand connotation of moral education. (2) Moral education is now integrated into English class. (3) As for the teaching contents, more of the traditional cultures, history, love of the motherland, social responsibility etc. are welcomed in the English class. (4) Teachers need to improve their professional ability and update teaching methodologies. (5) Blended teaching should be involved to better integrate moral education in English class. In short, students not only have expectations of the teaching methods but also the teaching contents from their English classes (see Table 1).

## 4 Hypothesis and strategies of moral education in college English with blended learning

This paper, based on the approach of blended learning, proposed a hypothesis and some strategies of operating moral education (See Figure 2).



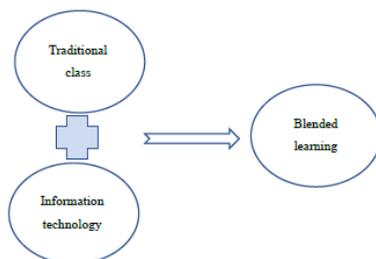
**Fig. 2.** Hypothesis of moral education in college English with blended learning.

This hypothesis proposed that (1)from the macro-level, teaching objectives, teaching methods, and teaching notions need updating (2)blended learning or moral education in college English could be applied in different teaching stages(3) various measures could be blended with blended teaching.

To enhance the teaching effect of moral education, teaching objectives should at first integrated with the requirements of moral education (see Figure 2). Moral education with the approach of blended learning could be divided into three phrases (see Figure 2). In the first phrase, teachers could assign online tasks for the students according to the objectives of the texts. Students should do a report according to the task in Stage Two. The report includes contents such as themes of the text, students' opinions of the text, questions, recommendations of other materials related to moral education. In the last stage, students will also be given some online tasks yet they need to give feedbacks to the teacher. With the guideline form the macroscopic perspective, microscopic measurements of moral education include: integrating blended learning into teaching practice throughout the whole teaching process, activating teachers' awareness of moral education, updating teaching texts and materials, involving more students into the class, etc.

### 4.1 Integrating blended learning into teaching practice

“Blended learning also is used to describe learning that mixes various event-based activities, including face-to-face classrooms, live e-learning, and self-paced learning.[1]”To put moral education into practice through the whole teaching practice, integrating blended learning with traditional classes is beneficial. NIIT divided blended learning into three models: skill-driven learning, attitude-driven learning, and competency-driven learning. Skill-driven learning combines self-paced learning with instructor or facilitator support to develop specific knowledge and skills.[1] In the first stage of moral education, students who need to complete the assigned tasks by themselves could develop their own critical thinking abilities. With blended learning, a considerable amount of online resources could be integrated into the class.

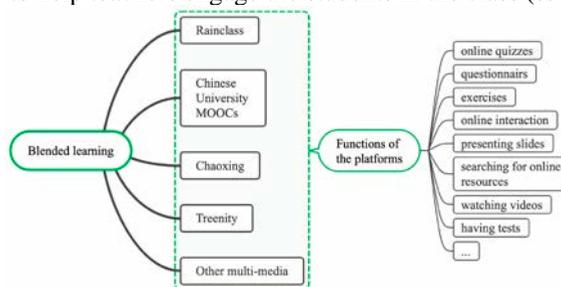


**Fig. 3.** Relationship among traditional class, information technology and blended learning.

### 4.2 Activating teachers' awareness of applying blended learning in moral education

Teachers are important characters in the class. They function as the introducer and leader who cultivate students' abilities from multiple dimensions. They also play a key role in implementing moral education in the English class. However, currently, teachers' awareness of moral education should be deeply activated and teaching environment should be perfected so as to provide a better platform for the teachers. In addition, teachers could attend more conferences or workshops of how to teach moral education, learning to analyze the moral elements of the teaching materials.

Application of blended learning could boost the teaching efficiency. Chinese University MOOCs, for example, provides plenty of free online resources; rain-class, another platform, offers many functions to help teachers engage the students in the class (see Fig. 4).



**Fig. 4.** Application of blended learning in teaching practice.

### 4.3 Updating teaching texts and materials

Current teaching materials cover little introduction to moral education, so to better meet the requirements of moral education, new teaching Texts book and other related materials need to be updated. Publications need to cooperate with the editors and support this updating work. Moral elements should be largely included to inspire students. Moreover, online texts need to be developed, which helps students to learn anywhere and anyplace as they like.

Other measures like covering more of the traditional cultures into the classes, systematic introduction to moral education, comparative studies on moral education at home and abroad, perfecting teaching guidance etc.

## 5 Conclusion

Blended learning, as a helpful teaching model, could be combined with moral education into college English teaching. This paper focuses on how to construct moral education with

blended learning, and finds out that (1) blended learning has been studied for long at abroad, which could provide both theoretical and practical references for domestic research (2) not all the students have a clear understanding of moral education (3) efficient measures need to be implemented into constructing moral education in college English teaching.

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