Implementation of Chinese Modern Literature Course Using Blended Learning Based on MOOC Platform to Cultivate Students' Creative Thinking

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Abstracts

Background and aim: Ongoing reforms in educational curricula, particularly in China, are reshaping the roles of teachers and students within the classroom. Cultivating students' creative thinking is a crucial aspect of liberal arts education. The aims of the research are to examine the implementation of the Chinese Modern Literature course and its effectiveness in promoting students' creative thinking and students' satisfaction with the course.

Methodology: This study involved a sample of 30 first-year students, selected through cluster random sampling, from Zhoukou Normal University in Zhoukou City, Henan Province, China. The research employed the following instruments: 1) Chinese Modern Literature coursewith mean scores of 4.75 (SD=0.44) 2) eight lesson plans designed for blended learning based on a MOOC platform, demonstrating a high level of appropriateness with mean scores range from of 4.76-4.89 (SD=0.22-0.36); 3) a test assessing students' creative thinking abilities in the Chinese modern literature course with reliability of 4.50 (SD=0.52); and 4) a questionnaire measuring students' satisfaction with reliability of 4.62 (SD=0.63) The research administered both pre-test and post-test to assess students' creative thinking and employed to assess students' satisfaction. Data were collected and analyzed by means, standard deviation, a paired samples t-test, and a one-sample t-test.

Results: The findings indicated that: (1) the data from the test of students' creative thinking revealed that the mean scores of the post-test (M=40.30, S.D.=3.03) was higher than that of the pre-test (M=32.23, S.D.=4.93) at .01 level of statistical significance (t_{29}=12.720, p=0.001); (2) the mean scores reflecting student satisfaction after completion of the course was 4.62 (SD=0.63), which was higher than the criterion of 70% at .01 level of statistical significance (t_{29}= 18.530, p=.001), were found to be at a very high level.

Conclusion: Students' participation and performance in the Chinese modern literature course demonstrated significantly higher post-test scores compared to their pre-test scores. Furthermore, their satisfaction with the course, based on was reported at a very high level.

Keywords: Chinese Modern Literature Course; Creative Thinking; Blended Learning; MOOC Platform

Introduction

Educational Transformation Demands

Contemporary higher education requires students to develop critical competencies beyond rote memorization—including analytical reasoning, practical application, and evaluative judgment. This shift responds to an innovation-driven society where evolving educational strategies must prioritize pedagogical innovation, resource optimization, and information literacy enhancement.

Policy-Driven Reforms

China's 2019 education policy mandates integrating teaching reforms into curricula, emphasizing technology adoption for educators and learners (Ministry of Education of China, 2019). The Chinese Modern Literature course exemplifies this through a MOOC-based blended model that balances knowledge, skills, and quality education. This approach challenges conventional learning patterns while fostering creative problem-solving abilities.

Challenges of Transition

Traditional industrial-era education models, reliant on memorization and repetitive practice, clash with modern demands. In an interconnected digital society where intelligent systems exhibit self-organization (Liu, 2017), four competencies become essential: 1) Mastery of digital tools for innovation,

2) Iterative teaching method refinement, 3) Cross-disciplinary knowledge integration, and 4) Lifelong learning cultivation.

Interdisciplinary Foundations

Educational reforms draw insights from psychology, computer science, and social sciences. Research emphasizes deep conceptual understanding and interactive learning environments (Bransford et al., 2000). China's 13th Five-Year Plan advocates ubiquitous online-offline learning (State Council of China, 2017), while policies promote digital course delivery innovation (Ministry of Education of China, 2015).

MOOC Integration Challenges

Despite MOOCs' transformative potential, inconsistent course quality hinders effectiveness (Su, 2019). The transition to "Gold MOOC" standards (Lu, 2018) demands rigorous evaluation frameworks and resource optimization. Effective blended learning must strategically merge digital accessibility with pedagogical depth.

Research Rationale & Approach

This study investigates creative thinking development through blended learning in Chinese Modern Literature. By analyzing behavioral and cognitive shifts during technology-enhanced instruction, it identifies critical factors influencing innovation capabilities. Employing hypothesis-driven methodologies, the research examines MOOC-based learning's impact on thinking patterns, utilizing multi-platform data to optimize instructional design.

Research Questions

The research probes into the question was how effective the implementation of the Chinese Modern Literature course, utilizing blended learning on the MOOC platform, is in enhancing students' creative thinking abilities and students' satisfaction.

Research Objectives

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Chinese Modern Literature course implemented through blended learning on the MOOC platform.

(1) To compare the students' creative thinking abilities before and after the implementation of the Chinese modern literature course.

(2) To evaluate students' satisfaction with the Chinese modern literature course with a criterion of 70 percent.

Literature Review

This literature review examines the application of blended learning via MOOC platforms in Chinese Modern Literature courses, with a specific emphasis on its implications for students' creative thinking and course satisfaction. The analysis is structured around four interconnected themes: challenges in traditional literature education, blended learning integration, pedagogical strategies, and outcome evaluation.

1) Introduction to Chinese Modern Literature Courses

Chinese Modern Literature courses face three interrelated challenges that contextualize the need for innovative pedagogical approaches. First, the expansion of higher education and shifting job market demands have increased curricular content without extending class hours, creating a mismatch between content breadth and instructional time (Zhang, 2021). Second, student engagement has declined, as many enroll merely to fulfill graduation requirements, resulting in superficial interaction with course material (Li, 2022). This issue is exacerbated by exam-oriented teaching methods that prioritize rote memorization over critical analysis, stifling both literary appreciation and creative thinking (Wang, 2023). Third, standardized assessments fail to measure creative competencies or foster genuine interest in literature, undermining the course's goal of cultivating intellectual creativity.

These challenges highlight the urgency of rethinking instructional models. Since the 1990s, the field has shifted from behaviorist paradigms to student-centered approaches emphasizing interaction and engagement (Brookfield, 2015). However, persistent limitations−such as insufficient teacher-student interaction and digital distractions (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Carr, 2010)−suggest that traditional methods alone are inadequate. The rise of MOOC platforms offers a potential solution by providing scalable resources and diverse methodologies to address these gaps (Bates, 2015). Effective implementation, however, requires aligning course design with student demographics, establishing clear objectives, and integrating online and offline activities (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008; Siemens, 2013). By addressing these factors, blended learning models may reconcile curricular demands with deeper learning outcomes.

2) Blended Learning with MOOC Platform

Blended learning, which merges face-to-face instruction with online components, has emerged as a viable framework for addressing the challenges outlined above. This model enhances flexibility, resource accessibility, and active engagement by combining structured MOOC content with collaborative classroom activities (Graham, 2006; Chen, 2017). For instance, MOOC platforms enable students to independently prepare for class through pre-recorded lectures, while in-person sessions focus on interactive discussions and problem-solving (He, 2014; Singh & Reed, 2005). Teachers transition from knowledge transmitters to facilitators, guiding students through self-directed learning and personalized progress tracking (Li, 2020; Mason & Rennie, 2013).

The integration of MOOC platforms into literature courses follows a three-stage process:

(1) Pre-class preparation: Instructors curate MOOC resources to introduce literary themes and cultural contexts, enabling students to build foundational knowledge autonomously.

(2) In-class engagement: Classroom time prioritizes critical discussions, interdisciplinary connections, and collaborative analysis of texts, fostering deeper conceptual understanding.

(3) Post-class consolidation: MOOC tools support assessments, peer feedback, and reflective tasks, reinforcing learning and encouraging creative application (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008; Means et al., 2013).

This structured approach not only mitigates time constraints but also leverages technology to diversify instruction. By providing multimedia resources (e.g., videos, simulations) and interactive forums, MOOC platforms stimulate student curiosity and accommodate varied learning styles (Johnson et al., 2014; Smith, 2010). Such flexibility is critical for sustaining engagement in literature courses, where creative thinking thrives in dynamic, participatory environments.

3) Course Structure and Teaching Strategies

The 17-week Chinese Modern Literature course exemplifies blended learning in practice, covering themes such as revolutionary novels, Lu Xun's contributions, and poetic modernization. To address the tension between content breadth and limited hours, instructors employ problem-based learning and interactive discussions, encouraging students to analyze texts through historical, social, and aesthetic lenses (Xie & Zheng, 2003). Close readings of representative works are supplemented with multimedia resources, enabling real-time feedback and multi-sensory engagement (Li, 2004).

Key pedagogical challenges, such as declining interest and misaligned assessments, are mitigated through adaptive strategies. For example, replacing standardized exams with project-based evaluations allows students to demonstrate creative interpretations of literary themes (Wang, 2005). Similarly, integrating Western literary theories into curriculum design is balanced with localized adaptations to ensure cultural relevance (Chen, 2016). These strategies align with broader research emphasizing the role of active learning in fostering social participation and critical thinking (Liu, 1999).

4) Students' Satisfaction

Student satisfaction, defined as the alignment between educational experiences and expectations (Oliver, 1989), is a critical metric for evaluating blended learning efficacy. Studies indicate that satisfied students exhibit higher academic persistence and are more likely to recommend their institutions (Bean, 1986; Harvey et al., 1997). In the context of MOOC-integrated courses, satisfaction hinges on factors such

as resource accessibility, instructor responsiveness, and the perceived relevance of assessments (Liao & Hsieh, 2011; Mukhtar et al., 2015).

Surveys like the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) reveal that blended learning models enhance satisfaction by accommodating diverse learning paces and preferences (Carey et al., 2002). For literature courses, this translates to positive evaluations when students perceive that online resources deepen their textual analysis and in-person interactions enrich their interpretive skills. Institutions can leverage such feedback to refine course design, ensuring that pedagogical innovations align with learner needs (Mukhtar et al., 2015).

5) Creative Thinking

Creative thinking−encompassing fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration (Torrance, 1966)− is central to literary education. In blended learning environments, MOOC platforms amplify creative potential by providing tools for divergent analysis, interdisciplinary exploration, and collaborative interpretation (Liu, 1999; Wang, 2005). For instance, multimedia content (e.g., audio clips of poems, video essays on literary themes) stimulates imaginative engagement, while online forums facilitate peer-driven idea exchange.

Assessments tailored to creative thinking, such as rubrics evaluating innovative responses to societal critiques, encourage students to move beyond memorization (Mumford & McIntosh, 2017). Research further underscores the importance of staged creative processes−preparation, incubation, illumination, verification−in developing nuanced literary insights (Guilford, 1987; Li, 2021). By embedding these stages into MOOC activities (e.g., iterative drafting of analytical essays, peer reviews), instructors cultivate an environment where creativity flourishes alongside critical analysis.

Synthesis

The interplay between blended learning, creative thinking, and student satisfaction forms the core of this review. MOOC platforms address structural challenges in literature courses by optimizing time management and resource diversity, while interactive pedagogies foster engagement and creativity. Satisfaction surveys and creative assessments serve as dual indicators of success, reflecting both institutional and learner-centered outcomes. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts of these models on literary competence and career readiness, ensuring that pedagogical innovations remain responsive to evolving educational landscapes.
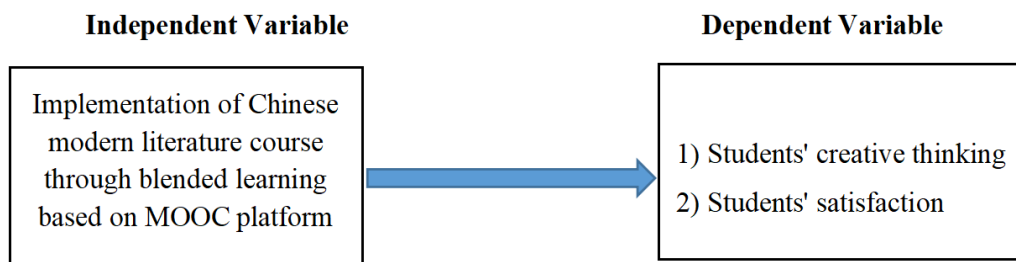
Conceptual Framework

This study investigates the causal relationship between implementing the Chinese Modern Literature course through blended learning anchored in the MOOC platform and its impact on two primary dependent variables: students' creative thinking development and course satisfaction. The independent variable is defined as the pedagogical approach combining face-to-face instruction with MOOC-integrated activities. The dependent variables encompass measurable changes in students' creative thinking capacities and their perceived satisfaction with the learning experience.

The framework seeks to elucidate how blended learning strategies mediated by MOOC platforms shape cognitive and affective learning outcomes. The rationale for selecting creative thinking stems from constructivist theories emphasizing technology-enhanced environments' role in fostering divergent thought processes. Satisfaction was included as a critical indicator of learner engagement, drawing from educational models that prioritize holistic student experiences in technology-mediated instruction.

By analyzing these relationships, the study aims to provide empirical evidence regarding the efficacy of MOOC-based blended learning in humanities education. This contributes to broader discussions about optimizing pedagogical innovation in higher education through strategic technology integration.

Independent Variable

Implementation of Chinese modern literature course through blended learning based on MOOC platform

Dependent Variable

1) Students' creative thinking 2) Students' satisfaction

Figure 1 The relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable

Methodology

Population and Samples: The population of this study comprised 300 first-year students majoring in Chinese Language and Literature at Zhoukou Normal University. The population was divided into clusters based on academic classes, with each class serving as a cluster containing approximately 30 students. Ten clusters were randomly selected from the total pool, and all students within the chosen clusters were included in the sample. Then, a sample of 30 students was selected using cluster simple random sampling.

Research Instruments: Research instruments were essential tools for data collection. The instruments utilized in this study included:

Instruments for the experiment

1) Chinese modern literature course through blended learning based on the MOOC platform

The researcher developed a draft course consisting of six components: 1) Rationale of the curriculum, 2) Aim of the curriculum, 3) Curriculum content, 4) Instructional process, 5) Instructional material, and 6) Learning assessment.

Five experts−two curriculum experts, two content instruction specialists, and one measurement and evaluation expert−evaluated the draft course using an 11-item evaluation form with 5-point rating scales. The mean score was 4.75 (SD=0.44), indicating that the course was rated at a very high level.

2) Lesson plans

The researcher developed an evaluation form for lesson plans, which underwent rigorous assessment by the same panel of five specialists. The panel evaluated eight lesson plans designed for the course using 5-point scales. The mean scores ranged from 4.79 to 4.89 (SD=0.22- 0.36). Based on these results, the lesson plans were deemed suitable for implementation, with a focus on nurturing students' creative thinking.

Instruments for Data Collection

The data collection instruments included a pre-test, a post-test for assessing creative thinking, and a satisfaction questionnaire.

Test Paper and Scoring Rubric for Students' Creative Thinking

The examination paper contained three items evaluating four aspects of creative thinking: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. The Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) values for these items ranged from 0.60 to 1.00, confirming their relevance to the course objectives. The difficulty level (p) was optimal (0.50‑0.70), and item discrimination (r) exceeded 0.20, meeting established criteria.

The scoring rubric's quality was validated through content validity and reliability checks. Content validity, assessed via IOC by five experts, yielded values between 0.60 and 1.00. Inter-rater reliability, tested during a trial phase, was 0.85, exceeding the threshold of 0.70.

Satisfaction Questionnaire

The satisfaction questionnaire was reviewed by five experts for content validity. Each item's IOC ranged from 0.60 to 1.00, with 15 items identified as appropriate for evaluating the blended learning course.

The questionnaire's reliability coefficient was 0.89, surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.70, confirming its internal consistency.

Data Collection

The data collection was implemented in the procedures as follows:

1) The sample was administered by a pre-test utilizing the constructed instrument to measure students' creative thinking.

2) Instruction was the development of the Chinese Modern Literature course, employing blended learning based on the MOOC platform.

3) Following the implementation of the course, the sample completed a post-test with the same instrument that was utilized in the pre-test. In addition, students' satisfaction was assessed by a satisfaction questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed by using statistical methods aligned with the research objectives:

1) The scores from the pre-test and post-test of the Chinese modern literature course were compared by using a t-test for dependent samples.

2) The data of students' satisfaction with the course were analyzed to determine the different scores of satisfaction with the criterion of 70% by using a t-test for one sample.

Research Results

The results were presented by the research objectives:

A comparison of students' creative thinking scores before and after participating in the Chinese Modern Literature course, which utilized blended learning based on the MOOC platform, was conducted using a paired-sample t-test.

Table 1 Comparison of students' creative thinking scores in the Chinese Modern Literature course before and after course implementation

Group	n	Pretest		Posttest		t	p
		M	SD	M	SD		
Experimental group	30	32.23	4.93	40.30	3.03	12.720**	0.001

**p< .01

As shown in Table 1, the mean scores of creative thinking for the pre-test were 32.23 with SD=4.93, while the mean scores for the post-test were 40.30 with SD=3.03. The analysis indicated that after the implementation of the Chinese modern literature course through blended learning based on the MOOC platform, the post-test scores were higher than the pre-test scores at the .01 level of statistical significance (t_{29}=12.720, p=0.001). These results demonstrate a notable increase in average scores following the course implementation.

The data presented in Table 1 demonstrate that students exhibited significant academic improvement in the Chinese modern literature course through blended learning based on the MOOC platform. Furthermore, measurable enhancement was observed in students' creative thinking competencies.

A comparison of students' satisfaction after learning through the Chinese Modern Literature course, with the criterion set at 70% (3.51), which was analyzed by using a t-test for one sample, is presented in the table below.

Table 2 The result of comparing the different scores of students' satisfaction toward the course after course implementation with the criterion of 70%

Group	n	Full score	The criteria score of 70%	M	SD	t	p
Experimental group	30	5	3.51	4.62	0.63	18.530**	.001

**p< .01

As presented in Table 2, the mean scores of the students' satisfaction after learning through the Chinese Modern Literature course were 4.62 out of possible full marks of 5, and the standard deviation was 0.63, which was statistically higher than the determined criterion of 70% at the .01 level of statistical significance (t_{29}=18.530, p=.001)

As indicated in Table 2, students reported exceptionally high satisfaction levels with the course delivery format following their engagement with the Chinese modern literature course through blended learning based on the MOOC platform.

Discussion

The improvement of the creative thinking result

After class assessments revealed that students' scores had been significantly improved, with pre-test scores (M=32.23, SD=4.93) and post-test scores (M=40.30, SD=3.03). Statistical analysis confirmed this improvement (t_{29}=12.720, p=0.001), validating the new teaching method and reinforcing the practical application of theoretical concepts. This developed course not only strengthens students' understanding of Chinese modern literature but also cultivates their creative thinking abilities. The findings suggested that students can independently apply what they have learned to solve problems in new contexts by utilizing creative thinking abilities to complete tasks without external assistance.

This study proposes employing a three-phase pedagogical structure: pre-class MOOC-based preparation, in-class interactive discussions with collaborative presentations, and post-class reinforcement through supplementary materials and assignments. A dual evaluation mechanism incorporating quantitative assessments and qualitative analysis ensures comprehensive learning outcome measurement. The integration of digital resources with traditional instruction demonstrates enhanced student engagement and knowledge retention, while cooperative learning strategies effectively develop critical thinking and teamwork competencies. This pedagogical innovation not only enriches literary education methodologies but also provides a replicable framework for humanities curriculum reform in higher education, particularly through its evidence-based approach to optimizing instructional design via continuous student feedback analysis.

The improvement of students' Satisfaction results

The mean scores of students' satisfaction with the course with blended learning based on the MOOC platform were 4.62, close to the maximum score of 5, with a standard deviation of 0.63. Statistical analyses confirmed this very high level of satisfaction was higher than the criterion of 70% at a significance level of .01 (t_{29}=18.530, *p*=0.001). The blended learning, which integrates curriculum design, in-class and out-of-class activities, learning evaluation, and teacher support, has effectively cultivated students' creative thinking and enhanced their independent and collaborative learning. Consequently, students actively engaged in sharing insights while absorbing knowledge from peers, leading to deeper comprehension and retention of course materials. The use of big data analysis tools like QQ and WeChat facilitated communication and feedback, reinforcing the importance of fostering creative thinking in enhancing the effectiveness of studying Chinese Modern Literature. In this case, the integration of a blended learning approach with an MOOC platform for the course not only deepens students' literary comprehension but also develops a lifelong learning habit.

Conclusion

The author developed and implemented a new course on modern Chinese literature and conducted an empirical investigation. The course development process included 1) establishing guiding principles; 2) defining objectives; 3) selecting content; 4) adopting instructional strategies; 5) selecting media and resources; and 6) designing assessment tools. The key steps in course implementation consisted of three steps: 1) Preparation before class, 2) In-class teaching, and 3) Assessment after class.

The results revealed significant improvements in creative thinking skills, with a significance level of .01. Additionally, student satisfaction exceeded the established threshold of 70%, with a statistical significance level of .01. These findings suggested that the blended learning model for the modern Chinese literature course, based on the MOOC platform, effectively enhances students' outcomes, especially creative thinking skills. Therefore, this approach can be directly adopted by educators and institutions specializing in modern Chinese literature, while also fostering further research in this field.

Recommendations

Selecting Teaching Methods

In the discussion of instructional methods, particular attention should be given to the effective integration of blended learning with the MOOC platform. This integrated approach encourages students to collaborate in groups, engage in interactive discussions, summarize their learning collectively, and take on both individual and shared responsibilities. The learning process prioritizes the development of students' abilities to reflect, share insights, innovate, and consolidate knowledge through novel experiences. As such, clear guidelines for group formation are essential, and educators must provide sufficient support and resources.

Throughout the instructional process, instructors should engage in evaluative discussions with students about their research findings and collaboratively explore the theoretical knowledge acquired. The study emphasizes the pivotal role of demonstration in the teaching process.

Through optimizing curriculum development and elevating student outcomes, integrating blended teaching methodologies with MOOC platforms is critical. This approach should emphasize collaborative learning through structured group interactions, team-based knowledge summarization, and shared accountability. Educators must prioritize the design of interactive online resources and high-quality instructional materials aligned with national policies, societal needs, and learner-centric objectives. A multidimensional evaluation framework is essential, assessing not only theoretical mastery but also creativity, flexibility, and practical application. The teaching process should foster reflective thinking, innovation, and knowledge consolidation through guided experiential learning. Additionally, addressing students' emotional needs and satisfaction through responsive feedback mechanisms is vital. To sustain relevance, curricula must evolve with technological advancements and societal demands, ensuring dynamic alignment between pedagogical strategies, platform functionalities, and measurable learning gains.

Assessment Techniques

Assessment methods must be carefully aligned with the objectives outlined in the teaching plan, which are derived from the course goals. Evaluations should encompass all aspects of the content, including practical applications, rather than focusing exclusively on theoretical knowledge. Furthermore, attention should be given to addressing students' emotional needs and enhancing satisfaction through feedback evaluations.

Recommendations for Further Research

Diversifying students' participation: Furthermore, the study exclusively involved students from Zhoukou Normal University as participants. Future research could benefit from collaboration with students from other universities or research institutions, as well as from students across various majors within the same discipline.

Exploring additional learning methods: Additionally, while this study focused on the blended teaching method for Chinese modern literature based on the MOOC platform, other innovative learning methods should be explored. For example, integrating web platforms with blended teaching or combining inquiry-based learning with problem-solving strategies could substantially enhance both teaching and learning outcomes in Chinese modern literature courses.

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