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English Students: A Knowledge Creation Perspective

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前 言

近十余年来,在国内商务英语作为英语专业的一个重要分支取得了令人关注的发展。随着全国 700 多所本科院校蓬勃开设商务英语专业,商务英语专业课程设置、人才培养以及创新教学与学习模式引起了外语学界深度关注。当今的大学生“生于互联网,长于互联网”,对信息技术依赖,对新事物充满好奇;他们追求个性、认知多元、勇于创新;他们旺盛的求知欲与基于互联网的学习方式呼唤着商务英语教育的变革与创新。本书主要关注当今商务英语专业学生在合作学习中的知识观、概念探究以及英语语言实际运用,积极探索在商务英语教育中如何运用现代信息技术与知识创新学习理念,促进学生创造新知,提升实际商务语言沟通能力。

全书共有 8 个章节。第一部分导言介绍了该书写作背景与写作目的。随着高校商务英语专业蓬勃发展,针对商务英语创新学习的研究无疑成为信息时代商务创新人才培养的重要前提。因而,基于先进创新学习理念与信息技术的商务英语知识创新学习研究具有前沿性、前瞻性与创新性。第二、三、四章是本书的理论框架部分。第三章详细阐述了西方学习理论嬗变,着重介绍了知识创新学习理论;梳理了在高等教育研究领域,对学生知识观、学习方式与策略(包括元认知、自主学习)的

研究现状。第三章主要介绍信息技术支持下协作知识创新学习理论。第四章全面介绍中国商务英语教育发展与现状,聚焦当今主导的商务英语教学模式,首次提出运用知识创新学习理念与信息技术支持的社会学习与探究模式,整合商务概念探究、高阶思维能力以及商务英语沟通能力培养的理论模型。第五章详细介绍在上海某高校开展商务英语创新学习研究的研究设计与混合式研究方法的运用。第六、七章分别汇报了两个实证研究。第六章的先导性研究主要调查目前中国商务英语教学中常用的基于项目调研教学模式下(PjBL),中国学生的知识观与商务英语学习策略的使用现状,以及它们与商务英语学习效果之间的关系。该研究的发现为主体研究设计与实施提供了实证基础。第七章是主体研究部分,汇报了为期一个学期的基于真实教学环境下的准实验教学研究。参与该研究的两位教师分别运用基于项目调研教学模式(PjBL)和基于创新学习理念下的计算机支持协作探究模式教学。通过问卷调查、写作文本、小组学习文件档案、商务口头和书面报告、商务英语语言水平测试、焦点小组访谈等多渠道数据的分析发现,计算机支持协作探究模式更有助于提升学生对商务概念的理解、提升协作建构新知和书面商务沟通能力。第八章回顾了本书提出的商务英语创新学习的理论模型,剖析了该研究对商务英语学习与教学领域的理论贡献和实际指导意义。该研究创造性地移植西方知识创新理论,借助现代信息技术,最大程度地实现理论与实践相结合,为商务英语创新性人才的培养提供了新的思路。

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ABSTRACT

This book addresses the key issue in English for International Business (EIB) education in China concerning how to design, implement and evaluate a collaborative project inquiry learning environment and to examine — and ultimately enhance — Chinese tertiary EIB students' beliefs, processes and products for learning and collaboration. This research reported in this book is premised on social constructivist theories and particularly on knowledge building model, paralleled with EIB education reforms in China emphasizing life-long learning, collaborative inquiry, knowledge creation and business communication competence. Rationale of the study stems from the observations that while social constructivist instructional approaches are becoming commonplace in EIB education, there exist epistemological and ontological discrepancies between the conventional didactic ways of teaching and learning and the innovative social constructivist approaches, such as project-based learning, computer-supported inquiry learning. Profound contextual understanding of students learning and collaboration will prepare students for a better design innovation and for optimal learning opportunities.

This study aims to (a) investigate beliefs about and strategies for learning and collaboration in project-based instruction among EIB

students' in the Chinese mainland (Study 1), and (b) to design, implement, and evaluate a computer-supported collaborative inquiry learning (CSCIL) environment to enhance student changes in collaborative project inquiry, language learning strategy use, business concept learning and business English communication competence, and to examine how such changes in EIB learning and collaborative inquiry take place mediated by principle-based use of technology in the designed learning innovation (Study 2).

Study 1 examined students' beliefs about and strategies for collaborative project learning. Participants were 25 students majoring in English for International Business in a Sino-British joint programme at a Chinese university in Shanghai. In-depth interviews were conducted focusing on project learning experiences interpreted from students' epistemological perspectives. Drawing on the findings, Study 2 designed and evaluated a collaborative inquiry-based online learning environment for improving students' learning and collaboration. The design principles were theoretically informed by knowledge building with particular emphasis on build-up of collective knowledge building climate to cultivate collective cognitive responsibility and epistemic agency and social metacognitive skills for inquiry.

Participants in Study 2 were four intact classes with 102 Year 1 students participated in a 12-week project learning in two different learning environments, namely computer-supported collaborative inquiry learning (CSCIL) and regular project-based learning environment (PjBL). Multi-source data obtained included surveys, student writings, group portfolios, summative tests, performance assessments, focus group interviews, and online interactions. Pre- and post-questionnaire surveys were administered to measure effect of the design on conceptions of collaboration, language learning strategy use and EIB learning outcomes.

Quantitative online discourse analyses were conducted to investigate the relations among online Knowledge Forum participation, business concept learning and business communication competence. Four project groups were interviewed to unravel how changes took place in both learning environments concerning conception of collaborative inquiry, language learning strategies and concept learning as well as business communication competence.

This study makes contributions to advance current understanding of preparing students for learning and collaboration in technology-enhanced collaborative inquiry learning in higher education. The design study also enriches the literature on student learning in higher education by investigating both the impact of innovative instructional practices and the process of changes in learning and collaboration in relation to such novel learning experience. It extends current understanding of the role of technology in both CSCL and EIB literature, providing additional evidence of the impact of principle-based technology-enhanced design on scaffolding deep learning and collaboration in higher education.

This study has important implications for EIB teacher training or development for designing for teaching and learning innovation. Pedagogically, it will shed lights on how Western social-constructivist teaching operates in Chinese tertiary classrooms. It will also inform policy makers, EIB educators and practitioners of how to design for enhancing students changes in epistemology and social metacognitive skills for 21st century education goal of knowledge creation.

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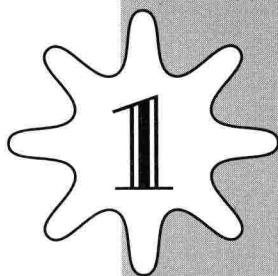
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CHAPTER



INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to Research

Successful functioning in a knowledge society demands more than the ability to perform tasks following prescribed procedural knowledge (Bereiter, 2003; Dochy, Segers, Van den Bossche, & Gijbels, 2003). It also requires collaborative and knowledge creation capabilities to respond to the challenges and pressures of changing societal demands, which are escalating with the rapid development of information technology. These changing demands are concurrent with theoretical shifts in learning theories, and higher education reform in many locales, including China, has placed particular emphasis on the drive to initiate and sustain teaching and learning innovations that foster students' collaborative and knowledge-creation capabilities.

In this spirit, there is a call for curriculum reform in the English for International Business (EIB) programme in Chinese

mainland universities, with the aim of replacing the prevailing jigsaw curriculum of English + Business featured by knowledge-transmission instructional approaches with an integrated collaborative inquiry curriculum emphasizing higher-order thinking, knowledge creation with use of English, and practical business communication competence towards the goal of cultivating knowledge-creation competence. In line with these curriculum goals, such western pedagogical practices as project-based learning and computer-supported collaborative learning are becoming commonplace.

This book was initially stimulated and motivated by my observation of Chinese tertiary students' project learning in a Sino-British EIB cooperative programme in a business- and economics-oriented university in Shanghai. Having been accustomed to didactic lecture-based teaching and a dependent and individual learning culture, these students were witnessed to undergo a long period of radical resistance before adapting to the programme's constructivist instructional approach. The common problems were a focus on tasks rather than on gaining deep understanding of problems, a lack of collaboration and problem-solving, an inadequacy of English language use in and out of class, and limited learning gains in either business concepts or the English language proficiency.

The questions that arose were thus how project learning and other constructivist-oriented collaborative inquiry instructional approaches that originated in the West could be made appropriate for Chinese tertiary EIB students. It is not enough merely to

implement new pedagogy in Chinese tertiary classrooms. Rather, a principle-based pedagogical design that is premised on learning theories with deep analyses of students' beliefs about and strategies for EIB learning and collaboration are needed. How do Chinese students conceive of the new project learning experience, and how do they learn and collaborate? Can a design of EIB project learning be improved to enhance students' conceptual understanding, collaborative knowledge creation and Business English language use?

There has been a major shift in the learning paradigm from an individual to a social view of learning and knowledge construction (Paavola, Lipponen, & Hakkarainen, 2004; Sawyer, 2006). Decades of Student Approaches to Learning (SAL) research has examined students' conceptions of and approaches to learning, but has primarily viewed learning as an individual pursuit (R.A. Ellis & Goodyear, 2010). The recent shift towards a socio-cognitive view of learning indicates there is a need to examine students' understanding of collaboration and their use of collaborative strategies as well as how they respond to new ways of interacting with knowledge and technology, particularly in EFL/EIB educational contexts in China.

Such examination takes on particular importance in the context of the Chinese students, who are assumed to be able to collaborate well because they have been brought up in a collectivist society (Y. X. Sun & Zhao, 2006; K. Zhao & Chan, 2008; Zhu, Valcke, Schellens & Li, 2009). Despite, or because of, this general