

# A Study on the Application of Task-Driven Approach to Higher Vocational "Infant and Child Care Communication Skills Course" Based on Online and Offline Blended Teaching Platforms

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## Abstract

**Objective:** To investigate the research on the application of task-driven method under the blended teaching mode to the higher vocational "Communication Skills in Infant and Child Care" course. **Methods:** A random sample of 32 students in Class 1 of the 2022 Infant and Child Care Service and Management Major of College N was selected as the experimental group, which was taught by the task-driven method under the blended teaching mode; 30 students in Class 2 were the control group, which was taught by the textbook-centered lecture method. At the end of the course, independent samples T-tests were conducted on the final grades of students in the two groups, corporate communication scores, teaching satisfaction, and scores on the Teacher-Child Communication Scale. **Findings:** 1. The experimental group scored better than the control group in Communication Skills for Infant and Child Care; 2. The experimental group's course satisfaction was higher than that of the control group; 3. the experimental group scored better than the control group in Teacher-Child Communication Cognitive Ability, Teacher-Child Communication Skills, Teacher-Child Communication Emotional Skills, etc.; 4. In the enterprise scoring of the students' communication skills, the experimental group was better than the control group in the skills of speaking, listening, asking question, answering, reading and writing. The differences are all statistically significant. **Results:** Adopting a task-driven approach in a blended teaching model can effectively improve the teaching effect of the senior "Psychological Communication Skills" course, make up for students' communication deficiencies in childcare services, and strengthen the quality of teacher-child interaction. Thus, it can provide caregiving talents to support the high-quality development of China's Infant and Child Child Care Business.

**Keywords:** Blended Learning Model, Task-Driven Approach, Infant and Child Care Communication Course, Teacher-Child Communication Skills

### **Introduction**

Care services for infants and young children under the age of 3 are an important part of life-cycle service management. Scientific and good infant and child care services are conducive to the overall improvement of China's population quality (Wu, 2022). A research group of the National Steering Committee for Teaching in Health Vocational Education (NCTEHVE) conducted a study on 100 childcare organizations in 18 provinces and cities in eastern, middle and western China, and found that the demand for caregivers' communication and cooperation ability literacy accounted for 96% of the total (Wu, 2022). Effective communication between child care workers and children influences children's school adjustment, developmental outcomes in all domains, and future relationships with teachers (Erbay, et al., 2012). However, among the PAP professional competency elements, the competency that students lack the most is also communication skills (Hu, 2017). It can be seen that communication skills have a significant value for interpersonal and professional development (Chant, et al., 2002), and are more capable of complementing the shortcomings each to improve the development of high quality in child care services. As a higher education institution that trains professional infant and toddler caregivers, it is imperative that the communication skills of infant and toddler caregivers be strengthened. Most of the current research on communication skills in infant and toddler care is based on teacher-child communication for 3-6 year olds. There is even less research on the communication skills of infants and toddlers aged 0-3 years old. At the same time, the teaching of communication skills in infant and toddler care still adopts the traditional lecture method, which leads to students' low interest in learning and lack of practical exercises.

Therefore, students need to realize the improvement of all infant and toddler communication skills, such as cognitive, verbal nonverbal, audiovisual, etc., through continuous practical training. This study will combine the content characteristics of the Infant and Toddler Nursing Communication Skills course, and apply the "task-driven teaching method" based on the constructivist learning theory to the teaching reform of the Infant and Toddler Nursing Communication Skills course (Task-D Task-Driven Method, 2017). To conduct a comparative study of the infant and child care course in the experimental group (task-driven method mixed teaching mode) and the control group (traditional teaching lecture method). To explore the curriculum model and method suitable for infant and toddler care communication skills training. Aims to improve the traditional teaching mode, give full play to the student's main role, and improve the students' interest in infant and child care communication skills course learning real with the cultivation of teacher-child communication quality (Aysun & Hasibe, 2017). At the same time, it provides a certain reference significance for the construction of the method of other related courses, and provides curriculum support for the professional development of Chinese childcare talents.

### **Research Objectives**

This study was to determine whether there are significant differences between the students in the experimental group under the application of the blended teaching model and the control group under the traditional teaching lecture method in terms of academic performance, teacher-child communication skills scores, teaching satisfaction and corporate communication skills scores after taking the higher vocational Infant and Early Childhood Care

Communication Skills course. The results of the data collected will be used as a basis for proposing ways to improve the communication skills of higher level students in infant and child care in order to improve students' academic performance.

## Methodology

### *Research Design*

In this study, a quasi-experimental research method was used to divide the randomly selected samples into two groups, the experimental group (Task-driven method under the mixed teaching mode) and the control group (lecture method under the traditional teaching mode), to conduct a three-month study on the teaching of Infant and Child Care Nursing Communication Skills in the higher vocational level. The results of the study were tested for normal distribution and then compared by independent samples T-test.

### *Respondents of the Study*

In conjunction with the content of the senior "Infant and Child Care Communication Skills" course offered in the Talent Cultivation Programme in semester 2.4.5, this study addresses the content of "Infant and Toddler Nursing Communication Skills - Teacher-Child Communication" in semester 4, which was conducted. The research subjects were selected from a higher vocational college in the class of 2022, majoring in infant and child care service and management, with a total enrolment of 63 students, 54 local and 9 foreign; 42 classified enrolments and 21 independent enrolments. They were randomly divided into two classes and none of them had any experience in the infant and child care communication skills course.

Therefore, according to the sampling method described above, one group was randomly selected as the experimental group to receive the task-driven method of teaching communication skills in infant and child care under the blended teaching mode, and the other group as the control group to learn synchronously according to the original teaching plan and teaching method. 32 students in Class 1 were the observation group, which adopted the task-driven training mode under the blended teaching mode; and 30 students in Class 2 were the control group, which adopted the traditional classroom teaching mode. In order to ensure that the two classes of infants and toddlers involved in the study had similar levels of original communication skills, a pre-test was administered to the infants and toddlers in the three classes to test the starting level.

Table 1

*Test for normal distribution of pre-test scores of experimental and control groups*

Group	Statistics	df	P
E-Group	0.968	32	0.439
C-Group	0.973	30	0.614

It can be seen that the P-values of the two sets of data are 0.439 and 0.614 respectively. The P-values are greater than 0.05, proving that both sets of data are normally distributed. Independent samples t-test can be performed.

Table 2

*Comparison of scores between the experimental and control groups on the pre-test of Communication Skills in Infant and Child Care*

Group	RS*	ER*	
E-Group	32	70.88±9.46	
C-Group	30	70.93±9.60	
t			-.024
p			0.981

\* RS-Research Subject, ER-Examination Results

In this study, the teaching time, teaching materials used, credit hours, core content, and instructors were unchanged, while controlling for other irrelevant variables, the differences were statistically significant. ( $p < 0.05$ )

### Findings

The following combines the results of the data collected from the experimental group of the task-driven approach under the blended mode of teaching and the control group of the traditional mode of teaching during the course study of Communication Skills for Infant and Child Care.

#### ***Comparative analysis of the performance of the "Psychological Communication Skills" course between the control group and the experimental group***

According to Table 3, in order to ensure that the collected scores of the infant and child care communication skills course for Groups E and C can be subjected to an independent samples t-test, the data of the two groups were tested for normal distribution and  $p > 0.05$ , so there is a normal distribution. According to Table 4, independent samples t-test was conducted for Group E and Group C. It can be seen that both groups have P-value less than 0.05 and there is a significant difference.

Table 3

*Test for normal distribution of post-test scores of experimental and control groups Comparison of results between the experimental group and control group*

Group	statistics	df	P
E-Group	.966	32	0.399
C-Group	.966	30	0.429

Table 4

*Comparison of scores between the experimental and control groups on the post-test of Communication Skills in Infant and Child Care ( $\bar{x} \pm s$ , score)*

Group	RS*	ER*
E-Group	32	83.28±7.497
C-Group	30	75.73±8.804
t		3.642
p		0.001

\* RS-Research Subject, ER-Examination results

***Analysis of the satisfaction of the control group and the experimental group with the course "Communication Skills for Infant and Child Care"***

A questionnaire based on satisfaction with teaching a course on communication skills in infant and child care combined with satisfaction with teaching skills collected on a 5-point Likert scale regarding the skills of speaking, listening, asking, answering, laughing, looking, and writing. A cross-tabulation analysis with Groups E and C showed that there was also a significant difference between Groups E and F in terms of satisfaction with the Infant and Child Care nursing course.

Table 5

*Satisfaction scores of the experimental and control groups with the teaching of the programme on communication skills for infants and toddlers*

Question	Group	Mean				
		Strongly agree	Agree	neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.The course helped to improve my skills in saying	E	78.13%	21.88%	0%	0%	0%
	C	23.08%	30.77%	43.31%	3.85%	0%
2.This course helped me to improve my questioning skills	E	68.75%	31.25%	0%	0%	0%
	C	42.31%	19.23%	34.62%	3.85%	0%
3.This course helped me to improve my answering skills	E	53.24%	46.88%	0%	0%	0%
	C	34.62%	30.77%	34.62%	0%	0%
4.This course helps me to improve my viewing skills	E	62.5%	37.5%	0%	0%	0%
	C	19.23%	38.46%	36.62%	0%	0%
5.This course helps me to improve my writing skills	E	59.38%	40.63%	0%	0%	0%
	C	23.08%	46.15%	7.69%	0%	0%
6.I am interested in this course	E	62.5%	37.5%	0%	0%	0%
	C	26.92%	46.15%	3.85%	23.08%	0%

***Comparison of the scores of the Diagnostic Tool Scale of Teacher-Child Communication Skills between the students in the observation group and the experimental group***

The Teacher-Child Communication Competence Diagnostic Tool Scale mainly examines the students' competence in the three aspects of teacher-child communication cognition, teacher-child communication skills, and teacher-child communication emotions. After the course, Group E and Group C were tested, and the scores of the two groups were tested for normal distribution and t-test, and the data are shown in Tables 6 and 7. The scores of the two groups were normally distributed and there was a significant difference between the scores of Groups E and F ( $P < 0.05$ ).

Table 6

*Normality test of the scores on the diagnostic tool scale of teacher-child communication skills of students in the observation and experimental groups*

Group	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistics	df	P
E-CC	.945	32	0.127
E-CS	.952	30	0.278
E-CE	.955	32	0.280
C-CC	.948	30	0.135
C-CS	.963	32	0.347
C-CE	.964	30	0.373

Table 7

*Comparison of scores on the Diagnostic Tool for Teacher-Child Communication Skills Scale between students in the observation and experimental groups ( $\bar{x} \pm s$ , score)*

Group	RS*	CC *	CS*	CE*
E-Group	32	24.74±3.214	25.26±3.425	23.90±2.959
C-Group	30	22.65±4.247	21.23±3.905	21.77±4.248
t		2.192	4.322	2.292
p		0.032	0.000	0.026

\* CC-Communication Cognition, CS-Examination results, CE-Communicate Emotion

***Comparison of companies' ratings of students' communication skills between the observation group and the experimental group***

Students enter the business for an infant and child care practicum in their final semester. At the end of the practicum, the lead teachers of the enterprises rated the students based on the skills of speaking, listening, seeing, asking, answering, laughing, reading and writing respectively. Finally, the scores of Group E and Group C were collected for normal distribution test and independent sample t-test. As shown in Table 8, the data of the two groups were normally distributed. As shown in Table 9, Group E and Group C showed a significant difference in the skills of speaking, listening, reading, asking, answering, and laughing ( $p < 0.05$ ), while no significant difference was seen in the skills of writing ( $p > 0.05$ )

Table 8

*Test of Normal Distribution of Business-to-Student Infant and Toddler Care Communication Skills Ratings in the Observation and Experimental Groups*

Group	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistics	df	P
E-S	.980	32	0.786
E-L1	.955	30	0.244
E-A1	.949	32	0.132
E-A2	.947	30	0.141
E-L2	.938	32	0.064
E-W	.966	30	0.396
C-S	.957	32	0.259
C-L1	.971	30	0.567
C-A1	.963	32	0.363
C-A2	.947	30	0.414
C-L2	.942	32	0.378
C-W	.971	30	0.557

Table 9

*Independent samples T-test comparing observation and experimental group companies' ratings of students' communication skills ( $\bar{x} \pm s$ , score)*

Group	RS*	SS*	L <sub>1</sub> S*	A <sub>1</sub> S*
E-Group	32	84.69±6.76	84.97±5.56	84.19±6.33
C-Group	30	78.10±7.28	76.73±6.20	78.07±8.58
t		3.696	5.513	3.219
p		0.000	0.000	0.002
Group	RS*	A <sub>2</sub> S*	L <sub>2</sub> S*	WS*
E-Group	32	83.59±7.33	85.16±6.60	84.14±4.07
C-Group	30	78.00±5.86	75.97±8.68	77.62±4.66
t		3.306	4.714	1.600
p		0.002	0.000	.115

\*SS-Speaking Skills, L<sub>1</sub>S-Listening Skills, A<sub>1</sub>S-Asking Skill, A<sub>2</sub>S-Answering Skill, L<sub>2</sub>S-Looking Skill, WS-Writing Skill

## Discussion

### **Task-driven approach in blended learning model can improve students' interest in learning and students' performance**

As shown in Table 4, the results indicate that the performance of the experimental group using the task-driven method under the hybrid teaching mode (83.28±7.497) was significantly higher than that of the control group under the traditional teaching method (75.73±8.804). The difference was statistically significant (P<0.05). Meanwhile, in terms of students' satisfaction with teaching, as shown in Table 5, students in the experimental group were significantly more satisfied than the control group with the skills of speaking, listening, questioning, answering, reading, and writing carried out by the teacher. At the same time the courses were all interested in 100%, and the satisfaction level of group F amounted to 73.07%, with 23.07% being dissatisfied, which is a large difference.

The reason for this is that the blended teaching mode can provide students with rich learning resources and meet their individualized learning needs. The effective storage of pre-course task resources, in-course interactive data, and post-course data feedback improves students' sense of participation and quality of participation, which can provide students with process evaluation and improve learning effects. The cultivation of communicative competence needs to be realized through interpersonal communication, and the improvement of communicative competence can be realized through continuous interaction and verbal physical training (Xin.et al., 2014; Yang, 2020). As mentioned by Student B of Group E in the interview, in the Infant and Child Care Communication Skills class, "Before each class, the teacher would assign us tasks in real scenarios, and brainstorming and group presentations would take place in class. For example, if a 3-year-old child doesn't want to eat lunch, please list the ways to communicate and perform the scenario as a group. Every time we are glad to have such a training task, it's fun." It can be seen that the original traditional teaching method only leads students to grasp what are the skills in infant and child care communication, and students only mobilize mechanical memory. This study is the first to establish a connection between the task-driven method in the blended teaching model and the improvement of communication skills in infant and child care. Students were led to train teacher-child communication skills in real-life experiences of teacher-child communication situations and tasks. At the same time, it provides curriculum support for advancing the quality of infant and child caregivers on the basis of strengthening teachers' teaching reform ability.

Therefore, through the task-driven method, students can form the ability of analyzing and solving problems and the spirit of independent exploration and cooperative communication in the process of completing the "Task". The application of the task-driven method in the course "Psychological Communication Skills in Infant and Child Care" under the blended teaching mode, where students take the task as the center and actively construct the skills of speaking, listening, questioning, answering, and writing, and through diversified task contents (e.g., group training of communication skills with children of different ages, different personalities, and different temperament types, etc.), students are assisted in the practice according to different age groups and different contexts, different environments to master the methods of listening, answering and writing. Teachers should help students master the skills of listening, speaking, asking, answering, reading and writing according to different age groups, situations and environments. At the same time, teachers actively play a role in the integration of online and offline teaching in the teaching process, using brainstorming, naming, answering questions and other interesting interactive forms to improve students' learning interest, master the basic professional ethics and professionalism of the relevant caregivers, and comprehensively make up for the shortcomings of the students' communication to improve the students' comprehensive literacy.

### ***Task-driven method in blended teaching mode can effectively improve infant and child care communication ability of infant and child nursing students***

As shown in Table 7, after students filled out Liu Lihua's Diagnostic Instrument Scale for Teacher-Child Communication Competence with Good Reliability Structure, a comparative analysis of the data of the two groups found that Group E had the highest level of teacher-child communication cognition [(24.71±2.32 )score>22.65±4.247 , t=5.538 ,p<0.05)], teacher-child communication skills (questioning, listening, paying attention and responding, and ability to express and communicate and communication resilience) [(25.26±3.425) points >



( $23 \pm 3.905$ ) points,  $t=4.322$ ,  $p<0.05$ ], and teacher-child communication affective skills (extroversion, respect and equality) [ $(23.90 \pm 2.959)$  points  $>$   $(21.77 \pm 4.248)$  points,  $t=5.141$ ,  $p<0.05$ ], Group E was higher than Group C and there was a significant difference in the two groups' data were significantly different. However, The communication skills showed the greatest difference. In communication skills, the teacher carried out a variety of task-driven activities, and the students analysed and acted out different situations and cases. In conjunction with one student B's interview about self-evaluation, the student mentioned, *"I used to be afraid to open my mouth to speak. This is because in many courses in the past we mainly practised exercises and learnt skills. So there were few opportunities to practice. In the Infant and Child Care Communication Skills class, we did have a lot of skills that we could create and practice to communicate with toddlers, parents, and the director. It helped me a lot to know what it should be like with children."*

Meanwhile, as shown in Table 9. Students entered into a one-month corporate practice in a childcare setting after learning communication skills for Infant and Child Care in the fourth semester. At the end of the practicum, the corporate mentors of the students in Groups E and C were given rating scales of the students' teacher-child communication skills in terms of speaking, listening, seeing, asking, questioning, and writing skills. By comparing the scores of the experimental class and the control group, it was observed that the experimental class outperformed the control group in all communication skills. However, in writing skills, the p-value is greater than 0.05. This indicates that there is no significant difference between the two groups of study subjects in writing skills. As Group C was taught by the traditional lecture method, the students had more training in writing. For example, the practical case of communicating with young children and the writing of observation reports, so there is little difference between the two in terms of writing skills. Second, combined with the interview with the enterprise tutor. The enterprise's evaluation of the students in Group E is: *"XX is more willing to express himself, better execution; XX is more willing to be friends with children, squatting down to talk to children, and it is obvious that he knows how to get along with children"*; Most of the evaluations of the enterprise mentors in Group C are: *"XX is a very good writer, undertakes the media publicity work of our intermediate class group, and has sent a few very good reports on the public number."* So the application of the task-driven method under the blended teaching mode in communication with infant and child care has a better effect on improving the skills of speaking, listening, seeing, asking, answering and writing, and the skills of writing can be combined with the traditional teaching and the method, and then a better teaching effect will be achieved.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The quality of teacher-child interactions is related to the characteristics of the teachers and the children themselves, and can have a lasting impact on children's development. High-quality teacher-child communication promotes teacher orientation in young children, which in turn promotes healthy physical and mental development (Pinata, 1994). It can be seen that through the task-driven method under the blended teaching mode, the group tasks such as teacher-child role play, communication situation problem analysis, video case analysis, communication problem box design, etc., combined with the speaking, listening, questioning, answering, reading and writing skills necessary for communication among different groups faced by the Infant and Child Care service and management majors, strengthen students' communication cognition, understand their communication problems and obstacles, choose reasonable communication methods, and promote good communication mindset. In addition,

students can choose a reasonable communication method and promote the development of a good communication mindset. At the same time, the task format transforms theoretical communication skills into practical exercises and operations, which not only focuses on student-centeredness and enhances students' interest in learning, but also helps students to decide what to say and choose appropriate topics according to the communication target; remove listening barriers and master reasonable listening methods; clarify the purpose and task of asking questions and master good questioning methods; and know how to ask questions carefully. They learn how to answer carefully, express appropriately, and respond skillfully; they learn how to convey messages through micro-expressions and body language; and they master the appropriate writing style and the process of various writing contents (Loy, 2006).

To sum up, the task-driven method under the blended teaching mode has important value for the higher vocational "Infant and Toddler Psychological Communication Skills" course. At the teacher level, it further strengthens the teacher's teaching reform and the design ability of the Infant and Child Care Communication Skills course. It also provides a reference for the innovative design of other related courses; At the student level, it enhances the professional knowledge of infant and child care service and management students in infant and child care, and solidifies the skills and techniques of teacher-child communication and professionalism in infant and toddler service. Of course, as the main training window for infant and child care service personnel training, higher vocational colleges and universities also provide high-quality infant and child care communication skills for the high-quality development of infant and child care business.

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