The Establishment of Task-Based Teaching Design Courses for Developing Pedagogical Design Ability of Pre-service Teachers in Chinese Normal Universities

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Abstract

This study presents the design process of a task-based teaching design course in Chinese universities. The aim is to enhance the teaching design capabilities of candidates in Chinese language and literature while addressing the shortcomings of current teaching design courses in these institutions. To achieve this, task-based teaching has been incorporated into the curriculum. Utilizing the task-based teaching framework, the course was created through discussions among a group of experts. Once the course design was finalized, it was implemented for a semester at a university in China. The primary goal of this course is to foster the teaching design skills of Chinese language and literature pre-service teachers. This study outlines the course structure, designs teaching units, and details teaching activities among other components. Additionally, it explores the factors that should be considered when developing a task-based teaching design course. The findings aim to provide guidance for universities looking to implement such a course and to improve the teaching design capabilities of pre-service teachers in Chinese language and literature.

Keywords: task-based teaching, teaching design course, Chinese language and literature

1. Introduction

In recent years, the enhancement of teaching design capabilities among pre-service teachers has emerged as a pivotal issue in teacher education research. There is a pressing need to explore effective pedagogical strategies aimed at improving the teaching design proficiency of candidates in Chinese language and literature through dedicated teaching design courses. As a mandatory component of the curriculum for Chinese language and literature teacher education majors in universities across China, the teaching design course has encountered several challenges, including outdated pedagogical practices, misaligned teaching objectives, minimal student engagement, and an overall deficiency in fostering students' teaching design skills (Sinha & Kapur, 2021; Thosporn, 2024; Trinidad et al., 2020). In light of the growing emphasis on teacher education, the traditional curriculum model has proven inadequate in addressing the evolving needs of teacher education students regarding teaching design competencies (Kumar & Rewari, 2022). Consequently, amidst the ongoing transformation of the Chinese education system towards a progressive mode of development, there is significant potential to investigate and reform the teaching design curriculum and associated pedagogical approaches for pre-service teachers. Such reforms aim to enhance their teaching design abilities and to further the advancement of teacher education within universities, thereby cultivating a cadre of educators who are equipped to meet contemporary educational demands (Wang & Guo, 2021).

As highlighted by Bhute et al. (2021), traditional pedagogical approaches predominantly emphasize lectures, often resulting in a lack of communication and interaction among students. This limitation hampers their ability to learn from each other, thereby constraining the development of essential teamwork and communication skills. In contrast, the task-based teaching method diverges from conventional teaching strategies by prioritizing the connection between learning and real-life contexts. This approach fosters deeper engagement and collaboration among students, facilitating extended exploration within the framework of Chinese language learning, ultimately leading to significant learning outcomes (Rezaei, 2023). To enhance the quality of education, numerous countries have

increasingly embraced learner-centered pedagogical practices (Fang & Abdullah, 2024). Research conducted by Ismail et al. (2023) demonstrates that task-based teaching interventions significantly boost students' exploratory capabilities. Furthermore, this method offers students more practical opportunities than traditional teaching methodologies, thereby enhancing the relevance of acquired knowledge (Lam et al., 2021). In task-based teaching, students are required to undertake assignments aligned with course objectives, which not only cultivates their curriculum design skills but also fosters innovative thinking (Zhao et al., 2021).

Overall, task-based teaching represents an autonomous, collaborative, and exploratory pedagogical approach that effectively shifts curricular leadership from the instructor to the students. This shift meets the essential requirements of teaching design courses while simultaneously fostering the development of teaching design competencies among pre-service teachers. Enhancing the teaching design abilities of these pre-service teachers not only enriches the theoretical underpinnings of the curriculum but also establishes a robust foundation for practical teaching application (Sun et al., 2023). Ji (2020) emphasized that in authentic teaching contexts, students are afforded the opportunity to adopt diverse roles within group settings, allowing them to engage in the design and implementation of teaching strategies. This experiential learning facilitates an appreciation of varied needs and perspectives, thereby deepening the understanding of the diversity inherent in Chinese teaching design among pre-service teachers. Furthermore, the strategic design of tasks serves as a vital avenue for augmenting students' teaching design capabilities. By clarifying goal-oriented objectives and incorporating varied task types (Spada, 2022), educators can promote collaborative exploration and joint design of teaching activities, thereby nurturing teamwork and collaborative design skills among Chinese pre-service teachers (Chen, 2019).

The present study seeks to address the existing gaps in the practical application of task-based teaching theory within teacher training programs, specifically aiming to enhance the teaching design capabilities of trainee teachers through the establishment of a task-based teaching design course. Employing an expert review methodology, the study evaluates the efficacy of this course in achieving its objectives. The curriculum development process initiates with the formulation of teaching objectives, endorses task-based teaching as the primary teaching methodology and subsequently involves the meticulous design and assessment of activities for each teaching unit. This systematic approach aspires to bolster students' teaching design capabilities, cultivate innovative pedagogical thinking, and transcend the limitations inherent in traditional teaching practices. The ensuing sections will provide an in-depth elucidation of this process.

2. Theoretical Framework

Bui and Tai (2022) assert that task-based teaching creates opportunities for students to both acquire new knowledge and develop essential skills through engaging tasks. This pedagogical approach centers on the meticulous planning and execution of tasks, establishing them as foundational units within the teaching process (Duong & Truong, 2022). The primary objective of task-based teaching is to facilitate learners in assimilating new information while systematically organizing their pre-existing knowledge (Bobrova et al., 2021). A significant factor contributing to the sluggish advancement of teaching competencies among current teacher trainees is the insufficient availability of practical training opportunities. Many students exhibit low levels of classroom participation, which considerably restricts their ability to design effective teaching strategies (Eberle & Hobrecht, 2021). Task-based teaching prioritizes the establishment of authentic learning environments (Hattani, 2020). Such real-world contexts are intricately connected to students' daily lives, enhancing the perceived relevance of their learning experiences and, subsequently, their interest and motivation (Chua & Lin, 2020). The real-life scenarios often present complex, open-ended challenges that necessitate the application of learned knowledge and skills for resolution, thereby fostering the development of teaching design and problem-solving aptitudes (Schonlau et al., 2019).

Prabhu (1987) posits that learners are more likely to excel during task execution when they have previously engaged in a similar task under the guidance of an instructor within an authentic context (van Gog et al., 2020). This structured support allows for timely intervention when students struggle with comprehending task requirements (Hima et al., 2021). The integration of theoretical knowledge with practical application is viewed as an ongoing process. Consequently, future teacher education programs should embed situational simulations within the curriculum to nurture the teaching design capabilities of aspiring educators (McGarr, 2021). Willis (1996) introduced a widely acknowledged three-stage framework for task-based teaching, comprising pre-class tasks, task cycles (which include tasks, planning, and reporting), and a task focus that encompasses two forms of activities: analysis and practice (Huynh & Nguyen, 2023). This framework has gained substantial acceptance and implementation in the context of Chinese education (Siyi & Patamadilok, 2021).

However, there remains a paucity of course design cases that successfully integrate task-based teaching theories with teaching design courses. The present study proposes a structured division of task-based teaching design courses into three stages: pre-task, in-task, and post-task. Each stage incorporates specific task arrangements aimed at closely mirroring genuine teaching environments, thereby making the educational experience more engaging and scientifically grounded while enhancing student participation. In the curriculum design process, educators assume the role of facilitators during the pre-task phase, imparting theoretical knowledge and assigning relevant tasks. Conversely, during the task execution and evaluation phases, students take on leadership roles, fulfilling and assessing their tasks' completion. This dynamic fosters a balanced teaching environment that is both teacher-led and student-centered, thereby strengthening the teaching design competencies of teacher trainees. The relationship between these stages and the teaching-learning process is illustrated in Figure 1.

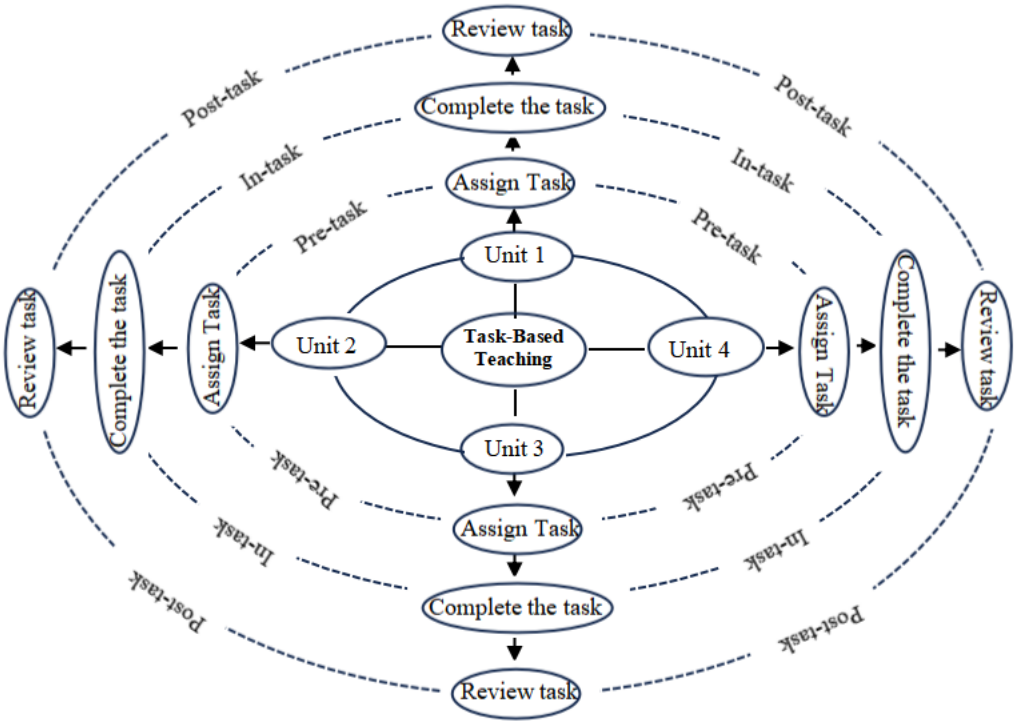

Figure 1. Task-Based Teaching Process

Description: A course framework of task-based teaching design compiled in this study.

The course outlined in Figure 1 employs a comprehensive three-stage learning process comprising pre-task, in-task, and post-task phases. This structure is designed to create authentic teaching scenarios that enable Chinese language and literature teacher trainees to enhance their teaching design competencies through the development of lesson plans, as well as the creation and recording of simulated teaching micro-courses. The pre-task stage is primarily instructor-led, while the in-task stage emphasizes collaborative group work among students. The post-task stage involves a dual evaluation system, where both students and instructors assess the completion and quality of the assigned tasks.

The course consists of four distinct teaching units, each comprising six class hours, culminating in a total of 24 teaching hours. The implementation of task-based teaching strategies encompasses simulated tasks, interactive tasks, and problem-solving tasks. Evaluation methodologies are diversified, utilizing a combination of formative and summative assessment techniques to gauge trainee performance and understanding.

3. Research Methodology

This study aims to integrate task-based teaching methodologies within teaching design courses to elevate the pedagogical design abilities of Chinese language and literature educators. The research is structured into two distinct stages. The first stage involves a thorough examination of the theoretical frameworks and related application

literature surrounding task-based teaching, as well as the identification of effective classroom strategies and methodologies conducive to enhancing the teaching design capabilities of prospective teachers. The second stage focuses on the development of curricular frameworks and teaching plans, followed by a review process involving five seasoned experts in the field. Their feedback will be instrumental in refining the curriculum and its structure. Adjustments will be made based on their expert recommendations to optimize course design and lesson planning. The specific pathway for course development is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Research Framework Task-Based Teaching Design Curriculum Development

3.1 Curriculum Design Based on Task-based Teaching

Drawing upon a comprehensive review of existing literature, this study integrates task-based teaching theory into the foundational curriculum for teacher education majors in Chinese language and literature. A specialized course focused on task-based teaching design has been developed for these students. This course is structured into four distinct units and spans six weeks, comprising four classes per week, totaling 24 teaching hours. The curriculum incorporates various task-based teaching strategies and is organized into three key phases: pre-task, in-task, and post-task, with delineated objectives for each stage. Students engage in practical assessments of course efficacy by devising lesson plans and producing recorded micro-teaching demonstrations. Evaluation within the course employs a combination of process-oriented assessment and summative evaluation, aiming to foster increased student engagement in classroom activities. This approach seeks to transition students from mere theoretical knowledge acquisition to practical teaching competencies, thereby enhancing their abilities in teaching design.

3.2 Expert Evaluation of Course Objectives

To ascertain the relevance and applicability of the course objectives, this study consulted five esteemed experts in the fields of curriculum and pedagogy. These scholars, comprising both professors and associate professors, possess extensive professional expertise and research credentials. All selected experts hold doctoral degrees or equivalent qualifications, have attained senior professional titles, and boast substantial teaching experience. Detailed profiles of the experts are presented in Table 1, while Table 2 delineates the finalized criteria for assessing teaching design competencies.

Table 1. Background Introduction of Task-Based Teaching Design Course Review Experts

Expert	Sex	Qualification	Title	Age	Fields	Working organization
A	Male	Doctor	Professor	62	Curriculum and Teaching Theory	Normal University
B	Male	Doctor	Professor	60	Curriculum and Teaching Theory	University
C	Male	Doctor	Professor	55	Curriculum and Teaching Theory	Normal University
D	Male	Doctor	Associate professor	57	Curriculum and Teaching Theory	Normal University
E	Male	Doctor	Associate professor	40	Curriculum and Teaching Theory	Normal University

3.3 Expert Effectiveness of Course Content Design

In this study, we engaged the five aforementioned experts to assess the relevance and applicability of the course content, and to provide specific recommendations for enhancement. The expert panel thoroughly reviewed the task-based teaching design, as well as the pedagogical frameworks and content across the four teaching units.

In the first unit, titled "Teaching Design of Prose Reading," Expert A recommended the revision of the term "prose texts," arguing that the prose selections included in middle school Chinese textbooks possess distinct characteristics that warrant the more straightforward designation of "prose." Additionally, Expert C proposed the incorporation of a segment dedicated to "presenting exemplary teaching practices" within the pre-task phase of the teaching activities. This suggestion stems from the observation that typical students have limited opportunities for actual classroom instruction, and by showcasing effective teaching examples, students can glean pedagogical strategies, compile experiential insights, and enhance their design acumen in teaching.

Regarding the sequence of instruction across the units, Expert B emphasized the necessity of arranging content in a progression from simpler to more complexes, as well as from contemporary to classical materials. Given the engaging language and succinct nature of prose, it is ideally positioned as the introductory unit to pique students' interest in reading. Conversely, ancient poetry and classical Chinese literature, which are both linguistically dense and chronologically distant, should be reserved for subsequent units. Expert E highlighted the potential benefits of incorporating a "group self-assessment" component into the evaluation process. Recognizing that lesson plans are often pre-structured prior to actual implementation, unexpected challenges can arise in live classroom settings. By integrating simulated teaching experiences, students can critically review and address the shortcomings of their teaching designs. Furthermore, Expert C advocated for a synthesis of formative and summative assessment methods, as this dual approach provides a comprehensive evaluation of students' teaching design capabilities.

Informed by the expert recommendations and an analysis of educational practices, we have undertaken revisions and enhancements to the teaching units and content. The five experts collectively affirmed that the selected units—comprising prose, novels, ancient poetry, and classical Chinese literature—are pivotal components of the middle school reading curriculum. They concurred that the teaching objectives are logically structured, the task arrangements are pedagogically sound, and the teaching design content aligns with the curriculum's key tasks. These enhancements are anticipated to bolster the teaching design competencies among Chinese language and literature educators and their students, facilitating effective knowledge transfer, skill development, and the cultivation of professional identity.

Table 2. Teaching Design Ability Index for Normal University Students in Chinese Language and Literature

Core competencies	Capacity Indicators
A. Planning and Analytical Skills	A1 Ability to formulate a comprehensive teaching plan prior to instruction and prepare relevant teaching materials.
	A2 Competence in applying curricular standards, including the nature and philosophy of the course, as outlined in educational guidelines.
	A3 Proficiency in analyzing textbooks, elucidating the underlying writing logic and structural framework of the materials.
	A4 Capacity to anticipate students' learning challenges by assessing their initial skill levels.
B. Design and Implementation Capability	B1 Skill in establishing teaching objectives and corresponding tasks that align with students' proficiency levels.
	B2 Ability to select appropriate pedagogical methods and design well-organized teaching content.
	B3 Proficiency in systematically arranging the teaching process to facilitate effective learning.
	B4 Competence in enhancing the execution of teaching design through innovative teaching techniques.
C. Evaluation and Reflection Ability	C1 Ability to apply principles of educational assessment, mastering various methods and techniques for formulating assignments.
	C2 Proficiency in judiciously selecting and utilizing evaluation tools to assess both learning activities and outcomes effectively.
	C3 Capacity to guide students in conducting self-assessments and peer evaluations of their learning achievements in accordance with established criteria.
	C4 Ability to critically reflect on teaching experiences, culminating in structured written reflections on practice.

4. Research Results

4.1 Teaching Design Curriculum Objectives Based on Task-Based Teaching

The task-based teaching design course is structured around three primary competency indicators: planning and analysis ability, design and implementation ability, and evaluation and reflection ability. These indicators are further delineated into twelve secondary competency indicators, as detailed in Table 2.

4.2 Task-Based Teaching Implemented Across Course Units

This course integrates task-based teaching methodologies divided into four distinct units: 1) Prose Reading Teaching Design, 2) Novel Reading Teaching Design, 3) Ancient Poetry Reading Teaching Design, and 4) Classical Chinese Reading Teaching Design. Each unit is carefully aligned with pedagogical objectives, ensuring a coherent integration of ability indicators into the overall course framework. In alignment with task-based teaching theory, students engage in progressive stages of task completion throughout the course. By navigating through the four units, students will enhance their teaching design competencies effectively. A detailed course outline is provided in Table 3.

4.2.1 Teaching Units

The content of each teaching unit is grounded in the literary genres prescribed for middle school curricula (Wei et al., 2020). This encompasses Prose Reading Teaching Design, Novel Reading Teaching Design, Ancient Poetry Reading Teaching Design, Classical Chinese Reading Teaching Design, and additionally, Writing Teaching Design. Reflecting the research objectives and educational goals, the task-based teaching framework comprises four units with the following focus areas: Unit 1 Prose Reading Teaching Design; Unit 2 Novel Reading Teaching Design; Unit 3 Ancient Poetry Reading Teaching Design; Unit 4 Classical Chinese Reading Teaching Design.

4.2.2 Unit Content

Unit 1: Teaching Design for Prose Reading

Prose plays an integral role in middle school Chinese language education, with selected texts showcasing literary excellence and depth. Engaging with these texts enriches students' humanistic knowledge and enhances their literary literacy (Xu, 2023). In this unit, the instructor employs task-based teaching strategies to facilitate students' comprehension of the "Compulsory Education Chinese Language Curriculum Standards" concerning prose. This groundwork enables students to understand prose content distribution across different grade levels, ultimately refining their skills in anticipating students' starting points, formulating prose lesson plans, and executing effective prose teaching.

Unit 2: Teaching Design for Novel Reading

Novels represent a fictional narrative genre that articulates comprehensive and vivid storylines through a series of events, characters, and conflicts (Zhao, 2023). The novels integrated into middle school Chinese textbooks encompass a diverse array of themes and narratives, including domestic, foreign, and ancient tales, which collectively enrich students' language capabilities and foster deeper societal understanding (Pulimeno et al., 2020). Within this unit, varied teaching modalities, including lectures and task-based activities, provide students with a holistic perspective on novel reading pedagogy. Collaborative group tasks allow students to draft novel reading lesson plans and simulate micro-teaching sessions, thereby enhancing their proficiency in designing novel-centric educational experiences.

Unit 3: Teaching Design for Ancient Poetry Reading

Classical Chinese poetry epitomizes the quintessence of Chinese cultural heritage. Engaging with this genre not only augments students' expressive capabilities but also nurtures aesthetic appreciation, enhances literary sensibilities, and positively influences mental well-being and social interactions (Cao, 2023). This unit focuses on facilitating students' competencies in drafting lesson plans for ancient poetry and executing effective teaching strategies through a tri-staged teaching approach: pre-task, in-task, and post-task phases.

Unit 4: Teaching Design for Classical Chinese Reading

Classical Chinese, characterized by its unique grammatical structures and lexical variations, presents significant challenges for middle school learners (Wei, 2023). Future educators, particularly those enrolled in this course, are encouraged to engage thoroughly with this complex genre (Xu, 2023). In this unit, instructors will utilize a combination of lectures and task-based teaching methods, alongside the presentation of exemplary and subpar classical Chinese teaching practices. This focus aims to equip students with the critical skills needed to discern the nuances of classical Chinese instruction across varying educational contexts and to grasp the fundamentals of

effective teaching design in this discipline.

Table 3. Teaching Design for a Task-Based Teaching Course

Teaching Unit	Teaching Objectives	Teaching Methods	Teaching Activities	Teaching Evaluation
Teaching Design of Prose Reading	A4 B1 B2 B3 B4 C4	Task-based methods Collaborative learning	Task 1: Introduce the essential principles of prose reading teaching design, showcase exemplary teaching instances, and assign relevant learning tasks. Task 2: Organize students into groups to develop comprehensive lesson plans for prose reading, record simulated teaching micro-courses, and deliver presentations in class. Task 3: Facilitate self-evaluation within groups, engage in peer evaluations between groups, and provide teacher feedback leading to a written reflection on the teaching design process.	Process evaluation Summative evaluation
Teaching Design of Novel Reading	A4 B1 B2 B3 B4 C4	Task-based methods Collaborative learning	Task 1: Present key concepts related to novel reading teaching design, exemplify high-quality teaching practices, and assign learning tasks. Task 2: Divide students into groups to collaboratively develop lesson plans for novel reading, record simulated teaching micro-courses, and present findings in class. Task 3: Implement self-evaluation within each group, conduct peer evaluations across groups, and facilitate teacher feedback to yield a written reflection on teaching design.	Process evaluation Summative evaluation
Teaching Design of Ancient Poetry Reading	A4 B1 B2 B3 B4 C4	Task-based methods Collaborative learning	Task 1: Introduce foundational aspects of ancient poetry reading teaching design, highlight exemplary teaching examples, and assign corresponding learning tasks. Task 2: Organize group activities to conceptualize ancient poetry reading lesson plans, create simulated teaching micro-courses, and present these in class. Task 3: Conduct self-evaluations within groups, peer evaluations between groups, and teacher feedback, culminating in a reflective written report on the teaching design process.	Process evaluation Summative evaluation
Teaching Design of Classical Chinese Reading	A4 B1 B2 B3 B4 C4	Task-based methods Collaborative learning	Task 1: Present key concepts for teaching design in classical Chinese reading, exemplify quality teaching approaches, and assign learning tasks. Task 2: Facilitate group work for the design of lesson plans in classical Chinese reading, record simulated teaching micro-courses, and conduct presentations in class. Task 3: Support self-evaluation within groups, implement peer evaluations between groups, and provide teacher feedback, concluding with a written reflection on the teaching design framework.	Process evaluation Summative evaluation

4.2.3 Teaching Methods

The task-based teaching method implemented at this research institute is primarily designed to enhance curriculum development by fostering the teaching design capabilities of pre-service teachers. This is achieved through the incorporation of simulated tasks, interactive exercises, and problem-solving activities. For instance, educators assign students the specific task of recording simulated teaching micro-courses. This task aims to immerse students in realistic teaching scenarios, thereby allowing them to navigate and respond to genuine challenges within a controlled environment (McGarr, 2021). Moreover, the teaching structure of this course necessitates collaborative engagement, as students are organized into groups where they elect a group leader and allocate tasks among members. Ultimately, the groups are required to present their collective learning outcomes. This pedagogical approach underscores the importance of cooperation and collaboration, contributing to the development of teamwork and social skills among students (Kao, 2019). Such an emphasis on collaborative learning not only enhances individual competencies but also prepares future educators to work effectively in team-oriented educational settings.

4.2.4 Teaching Activities

This course comprises three main tasks aimed at improving reading instruction across genres. Task One has the instructor presenting essential principles of reading instruction design, along with exemplary models and assigned learning tasks. Task Two involves student groups creating teaching plans for specific genres, simulating lessons through recorded micro-teaching sessions, and presenting to the class. Task Three emphasizes reflective practice, where students conduct self-evaluations within their groups, engage in peer evaluations, and receive instructor feedback, culminating in a written reflection on their teaching design experiences.

4.2.5 Teaching Evaluation

Evaluation is an important component of the teaching process (Gómez & Valdés, 2019). Conducting timely evaluations allows students to gain insight into their learning progress, identify challenges, and implement corrective measures promptly. Similarly, feedback derived from these evaluations enables educators to assess teaching effectiveness and make necessary adjustments to their pedagogical strategies (Alam, 2022). This study employs two distinct evaluation methodologies: process evaluation and summative evaluation. The process evaluation, particularly within the context of task-based teaching design courses, is largely manifested through daily assignments. For instance, instructors utilize a Learning Platform to assign homework that assesses students' comprehension of teaching design concepts, their recognition of exemplary teaching practices, the quality of lesson plans developed during each session, and their execution of simulated teaching scenarios. Furthermore, after receiving constructive feedback from peers and instructors, each group is expected to refine their lesson plans and simulated teaching presentations. The updated materials are subsequently submitted on the Learning Platform for final evaluation by the instructor, with this assessment contributing to their overall course grade. The summative evaluation conducted in this study takes the form of a final examination administered at the conclusion of the course. This assessment evaluates students' understanding and application of the theoretical frameworks underpinning teaching design, aligned with their acquired knowledge and competencies. The examination predominantly features a variety of question formats, including fill-in-the-blank items, multiple-choice questions, teaching case analyses, and lesson plan design tasks. Grading is collaboratively undertaken by two instructors to ensure reliability and objectivity in the assessment process.

5. Discussion

This study is grounded in the principles of task-based teaching theory and aims to enhance the course design capabilities of candidates in Chinese language and literature teacher preparation programs. The curriculum aligns with the methodologies and stages advocated by task-based teaching theory. Heng and Yeh (2024) demonstrated that the implementation of task-based teaching, coupled with the promotion of independent learning through authentic real-world scenarios, effectively equips students to address challenges encountered in practical teaching environments. Furthermore, Liu (2024) asserts that task-based teaching considerably enhances students' application and communication skills. The findings of Mäkiö and Mäkiö (2023) corroborate this, highlighting that interventions utilizing task-based teaching methodologies can significantly improve students' self-directed learning, problem-solving abilities, and teaching design competence.

In contrast to traditional pedagogical approaches, which predominantly rely on direct teacher instruction and passive student reception, Halasa et al. (2020) point out that such methods often lack engaging activities that actively involve students, which are essential for augmenting teaching efficacy. Task-based teaching, on the other hand, prioritizes

task orientation, process orientation, authentic environments, and self-directed learning (Liu, 2022). This pedagogical approach is notably student-centered, fostering real-life scenarios, addressing genuine problems, and employing diverse resources to facilitate learning outcomes. Moreover, it emphasizes the role of educators as facilitators and guides, assisting learners in goal-oriented tasks (Cai, 2024). This research specifically examines the organization of teaching activities by educators and advocates for dynamic adjustments to teaching content responsive to the principles of task-based teaching.

The course design utilizes foundational task-based teaching principles, enabling students to enhance their teaching design skills by navigating authentic challenges in Chinese language instruction and devising effective solutions. According to Xue (2022), the integration of theory and practice in task-based teaching allows students to deepen their understanding of theoretical constructs and apply these insights in practical teaching design settings. Regarding assessment methodologies, Ferreira et al. (2020) align with the perspectives of other scholars, indicating that formative and summative evaluations are critical in the educational landscape. Their study indicates that robust evaluation practices not only facilitate insights into student learning and teaching effectiveness but also contribute to the holistic advancement of educational practices. Zhao et al. (2022) further assert that the amalgamation of various assessment techniques, including process evaluations, fosters a comprehensive, objective, and multifaceted approach to evaluating student outcomes. Consequently, educators must transition from traditional knowledge dispensers to facilitators and mentors, providing necessary scaffolding to assist students in acclimating to the teaching environment. These principles are incorporated into the curriculum design of this research, aimed at augmenting the pedagogical competencies of participating teacher candidates.

Task-based teaching advocates for a process-oriented exploration and synthesis of knowledge grounded in students' interests while they engage in completing tasks, thus promoting the development of their teaching design capabilities. Unlike traditional pedagogical methods focused on rote memorization of content imparted by instructors, task-based teaching is fundamentally student-centered, with educators adopting roles similar to coaches or facilitators. This active learning dynamic transitions students from passive recipients to active participants in the learning process (Mojumder, 2021). The course design predominantly incorporates group discussions and collaborative projects, fostering interaction and communication among peers. For instance, when tasked with recording simulated micro-teaching sessions, students assume dual roles of teacher and learner, which enriches their understanding of classroom dynamics, management, and interaction strategies (Belano & Subillaga, 2024). This collaborative learning approach promotes peer-to-peer communication and inspires mutual growth, thus enhancing teamwork and communicative competencies. Chen (2019) emphasizes that engagement in group-oriented tasks necessitates collaboration and communication among peers, substantially contributing to the development of teamwork and communication skills. In summary, the application of task-based teaching strategies has a profound and beneficial impact on cultivating the teaching design abilities of students in Chinese language and literature programs.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this research suggest that task-based teaching design courses can be effectively adapted for the training environment of undergraduate students at Normal Universities in China. This study is significant as it has the potential to enhance key competencies among pre-service teachers, including teaching plan design proficiency, simulated teaching abilities, and collaborative skills-essential prerequisites for bolstering their overall teaching design effectiveness.

By innovatively integrating task-based teaching methodologies into teaching design courses, we can diversify pedagogical approaches and foster greater student engagement in the classroom. To further elevate the quality of education, it is imperative for researchers and educators to continuously refine student-centered teaching strategies, optimize the alignment between tasks and thematic content, and develop more realistic teaching scenarios. These efforts are critical for the sustainable advancement of teacher training students' capabilities in teaching design.

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