

Application of Blended Teaching Mode Based on SPOC in the Course of “History of British & American Literature”

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Abstract: *The research of blended teaching mode based on SPOC is still in its infancy in English major literature courses (direction in teacher education). Under the current situation of continuous reduction of course hours, large amount of information in literature courses, students' lack of interest and unsatisfactory teaching effects, this teaching design selects Victorian English literature as the design object. Based on the analysis of the characteristics of the teaching object, we cover the teaching objectives, teaching process, teaching evaluation and the usage of teaching materials in one unit and single class period, hoping to shed some light on the current reform of English literature courses.*

Keywords: *SPOC, Blended teaching model, History of British & American Literature, teaching design*

1. Introduction

SPOC (Small Private Online Course) is a small and restricted online course. The size of students is generally controlled between dozens and hundreds. Restriction refers to setting a restrictive access condition for students and only qualified applicants can enter SPOC courses. In essence, SPOC and MOOC are both hybrid learning. The difference lies in that SPOC mixes high-quality resources of MOOC with traditional classroom teaching, representing the development direction of the "Post-MOOC era". [1]53 The White Paper on Educational Technology in the United States (2000) clearly states that online teaching cannot replace the traditional classroom, although it can achieve some teaching objectives better to a certain extent. We can change the teaching function in some ways, but we cannot completely replace school education. [2] The emergence of Blended Teaching Model has both the advantages of online and offline. On the one hand, it can realize the richness and diversity of online virtual environment communication and learning. On the other hand, it can take into account the face-to-face emotional communication between teachers and students in traditional offline real environment communication and learning. Therefore, it is helpful to play the role of teachers' guidance and supervision, stimulate students' interest in learning, enhance their initiative and enthusiasm in learning, and ultimately contribute to the improvement of their learning ability, practical ability and innovation ability. This teaching design selects Victorian English literature as the design object. Based on the analysis of the characteristics of the teaching object, we cover the teaching objectives, teaching process, teaching evaluation and the usage of teaching materials in one unit and single class period, hoping to shed some light on the current reform of English literature courses.

2. Research Overview of Spoc Blended Teaching Model

Professor Armand Fox (2013) in University of California first proposed and used the concept of SPOC, which has been widely applied and achieved effective results. At present, foreign studies on SPOC blended teaching mainly focus on the blended teaching of accounting, software engineering, neurology, medicine and other disciplines. Kelana et al. (2017) studied the behavioral tendency of students in Indonesian undergraduate accounting courses to use SPOC for learning. Yamba-yugsi (2017) explored SPOC blended teaching of software courses based on edX platform and managed the platform by using Zendesk software. Lockhart et al. (2017) analyzed the feasibility of using SPOC for flipped classroom in neuroscience training; Nejkojic et al. (2018) discussed the factors influencing the effective use of online resources in SPOC blended teaching mode of engineering education. Martinez-vaysse et al. (2019) explored blended teaching of oncology based on SPOC and emphasized the improvement of cancer treatment and management through the establishment of a connection

between the community and the hospital. A few language and culture courses were involved in SPOC. For example, Bartalesi-Graf, D (2017) analyzed SPOC blended teaching of Italian language and culture courses. In China, SPOC mixed teaching mode was introduced in 2014, and since then has been applied in the teaching curriculum reform of science and engineering subjects and college English. The results mainly focus on two aspects: 1. Discussion on the concept of blended teaching based on SPOC. 2. Research on the construction of mixed teaching mode based on SPOC. From the perspective of the first aspect of research, scholars mainly focus on sorting out the evolution process from MOOC to SPOC, analyzing the concept of SPOC, and the characteristics and advantages of SPOC. It is believed that SPOC can organically combine high-quality MOOC resources with the advantages of face-to-face classroom teaching, realizing the reconstruction and innovation of teaching process. For example, Chen Ran et al. (2015) designed a mixed learning mode based on the characteristics of SPOC resources and the actual needs of teaching reform in colleges and universities, and he took the course "C language programming" as an example to design an application case. However, the overall quality of the research on the application of college English reform is not high. Most of the research stays at the level of preaching SPOC theory, and only a few are empirical studies. Compared with the reform in college English classes, the teaching reform in English major courses in China lags behind. So far, the research on the blended teaching model based on SPOC in English major courses is still in its infancy. The following is a practical application case of teaching design based on SPOC mixed teaching in the course of "History of English and American Literature" .

3. Unit Teaching Design Scheme

3.1. Characteristics of Teaching Objects

This course is aimed at 141 students from Class 1, 2 and 3, majoring in English teacher education, grade 2019, in the School of Foreign Languages of Kunming University. Most of these students have a good foundation when they enter the school. They have a solid basic English language skills and have a good foundation in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. All students in the class of 2019 are self-funded normal school students. Compared with those students who are funded by the government or receive free education, and will be directly assigned by our government to work in the place where they come after graduation without taking an exam, so these students in the class of 2019 face greater new challenges. Most of them will have to choose to participate in the recruitment and interview after graduation, and then be assigned to teach in primary and secondary schools in towns and villages of Yunnan province if they pass all kinds of examinations. A small number of students may stay in the city to work in various English training institutions or take postgraduate entrance exams for further study. Regardless of the employment channel, due to the fierce competition, the students of grade 2019 show high enthusiasm for learning and strong independent learning ability for their own future and dreams. On the basis of the first three semesters' courses learning, now they can better master the basic knowledge of vocabulary and grammar through independent learning, yet their ability of discourse interpretation is weak, thus the appropriateness, richness and higher order of language output need to be improved.

3.2. Duration and Overall Objectives of This Course

This course lasts for 17 weeks, 2 hours per week, a total of 34 hours (including the final examination). Its overall objective is to give students a comprehensive understanding of the origin and development history of British and American literature, as well as the important ideological trends, literary schools, major representative writers and their major works in the context of specific periods. On this basis, through the appreciation of selected fragments, students can not only broaden their knowledge and horizons, but also improve their comprehensive English language using ability, literary appreciation ability and cross-cultural thinking ability, thus laying a solid foundation for the further study about British and American literary works.

3.3. Unit Teaching Objectives

English Literature in the Victorian Age

After learning this unit, students should be able to:

Table 1: Linguistic and moral objectives

Linguistic objectives	<p>(1) Interpret the meaning of the pun word, “board”.</p> <p>(2) Learn the parallel structure, “It was the ..., It was the ..., It was the ..., etc.”</p> <p>(3) Appreciate and create a paradox.</p> <p>(4) Know and remember: brief history of English Literature in the Victorian Age (highlight its unignorable high status); Major writers and their representative works in this period.</p> <p>(5) Define “English critical realism”.</p> <p>(6) Find out the hidden problems beneath the shining surface of Victorian Age through text-reading or video watching.</p> <p>(7) Write about personal’s view about how to deal with the current epidemic situation.</p> <p>(8) Make a comparison between Victorian Age and Tan dynasty by comparing Dickens with Dufu from the perspective of critical realism.(group work)</p>
Moral objectives	<p>(1) Try to judge the characters from a dialectical point of view.</p> <p>(2) Have a better understanding of “Life is a hard journey , and he who can endure and persist has the chance to enjoy the happy moments”.</p> <p>(3) Know the importance of “integrity” and “friendship”.</p> <p>(4) Strengthen the confidence in Chinese culture.</p>

3.4. Unit Teaching Process

3.4.1. The main content, time allocation, design concept and ideas.

Table 2: The main content, time allocation, design concept and ideas

The main content of this unit	Time allocation	Design concept and ideas
<p>(1)General introduction: Background information about English Literature in the Victorian Age</p> <p>(2)Terminology: English critical realism</p> <p>(3)Major writers and their representative works in this period</p> <p>(4)Case study : Charles Dickens(1812-1870) , The Period (Excerpt) from A Tale of Two Cities; Chapter 2 (Excerpt) from Oliver Twist</p> <p>(5)Evaluation of Students’ writing: In the current international and domestic epidemic situation, write about, as individuals, how we should face the reality and take some measures to live a better life,to study better and to make more progress in the future.</p> <p>(6)Comparison between Victorian Age and Tan dynasty through comparing Dickens with Dufu from the perspective of critical realism</p>	<p>(1) to (4) for 2 periods;</p> <p>(5) and (6) for 2 periods;</p> <p>This unit takes 4 periods in total.</p>	<p>Design Concept: The unit is designed to integrate language and content (CLIL) (Coyle, D., Hood, P., Marsh, D., 2010), a blended teaching model based on SPOC, and the principles of critical English teaching (Sun Youzhong, 2019) in order to realize the comprehensive cultivation of students' English language comprehensive ability, literary appreciation ability, cross-cultural communication ability and critical thinking ability as well, so as to achieve the purpose of education.</p> <p>Design ideas: Before class, students watch videos online and offline, read textbooks, study by themselves and adopt other links as well to complete the preliminary knowledge accumulation; In class, through the teacher's guidance and explanation, students discuss and speak in groups, the teacher and students finish the task of analyzing the selected text and comparing the two writers together; After class, students consolidate and summarize what they have learned through practice and substantive writing.</p>

3.4.2. The teaching organization process, including specific steps and activities in and out of class

This unit takes 4 periods in total, and 2 periods per week. Each period is 45 minutes and the time break is 5 minutes.

First period (45min): Before class, students will watch video 1 "Victorian Documentary (English)" online, read part of the content of the first chapter of *A Tale of Two Cities*, "Times" (Charles Dickens, 2003), and preview the content of page 118-129 in the textbook to understand the background, literary achievements and works of representative writers of the Victorian Era. In class, the teacher guides students to analyze the two sides of the Victorian era, highlighting the many social problems that existed beneath its glorious facade. On this basis, the definition of "British critical realism" is given. Students should understand and remember the main forms of literary achievements in this period, and pay attention to its representative writers and their major representative works. Second period (45min): In class, the teacher guides students to review and further understand and strengthen the historical background and definition of "critical realism"; Students need to understand the usage of "paradox", analyze the difference between "paradox" and "oxymoron", and then appreciate the use of "parallelism" and "paradox" in the text excerpts of "A Tale of Two Cities", and the contradictory thoughts conveyed by them. Then it comes to group creation and sharing of paradox; The teacher guides the students to appreciate the extracts of "Oliver Twist", and then to discuss and summarize the historical background and social problems of the Victorian period reflected in "Oliver Twist". After class, students will complete the exercises on pages 172-174, and the teacher will provide reference answers and deal with students' puzzles online. Students are required to make a research about the life experiences and social background of Du Fu and Dickens online to prepare for the next class; Based on the text excerpts from *A Tale of Two Cities* and the international and domestic environments under the current epidemic environment, Students are asked to think about how to face the reality and live a better life, to study better and to make more progress in the future.

Third period (45min): Students submit completed homework online before class. In class, as for the online submission of homework, the student group and peer will conduct mutual evaluation online, and then the teacher gives feedback and shares excellent texts with students. Fourth period (45min): Students watch the 8-minute segment of video 2 "BBC documentary Du Fu (English)". The group discusses the Victorian era and Tang Dynasty through comparing Dickens and Du Fu from the perspective of critical realism. The group will share the discussion result orally, and the teacher will guide students to give the comments. After class, on the basis of class discussion, students will work together in groups to further consult supplementary materials. A week later, a small paper framework will be formed and submitted online. After completing the evaluation which will be included in the formative assessment, the teacher will give feedback to students.

3.4.3. How to achieve the integration of language and education in the teaching process of this unit

First, in offline classes, the teacher guides students to understand and analyze the two sides of the Victorian Era, highlight the numerous social problems existing under its glorious appearance, and on this basis, define "British critical realism" from the historical and dialectical perspectives, and learn its representative writers and their major works. The teacher guides students to review the definition of "critical realism", to find out the "paradox" embodied in the beginning chapter of "A Tale of Two Cities". On the basis of it, students go through group discussion activities to share "paradox" examples they have created as a collective work, and then sum up the Victorian era background and social problems reflected in "Oliver Twist". The evaluation of students' substantive writing aims at cultivating students' comprehensive English language use ability, literature appreciation ability, and critical thinking ability.

Second, as for the arrangement of online and offline homework, students are guided to make the comparison between Du Fu and Dickens from the perspective of critical realism, and then make the comparison between the Tang Dynasty and the Victorian period in a further step. Besides they are asked to consider how individuals can better cope with the current global situation of the epidemic to live a better life, to study better and to make more progress in the future. These aspects can not only further strengthen students' comprehensive English language use ability and literature appreciation ability, but also improve students' cross-cultural thinking ability, realizing the organic integration of language learning and educational goals.

3.5. Unit Teaching Evaluation

The evaluation concept of this unit is integrated into the concept of "Teacher-Student Cooperative

Assessment (TSCA)", and the concept of mixed teaching mode in and out of class or online and offline. It tries to follow the principles of "objectivity, impartiality, science, diversification and motivation". The evaluation methods are diversified, including the combination of immediacy and delay, formative assessment and summative assessment. The specific evaluation aspects are the followings: (1) in class or offline, evaluation mainly focuses on students' performance, such as whether they have actively involved in or not while analyzing the two sides of Victorian, defining and reviewing the "critical realism", revealing the social problems reflected in "Oliver Twist", and appreciating the opening excerpts from "A Tale of Two Cities". In addition whether they have actively participated in and contributed their own views and thoughts in group discussion and mutual evaluation or not are also considered. (2) In the extracurricular or online aspect, the focus of evaluation is on whether students' extracurricular independent learning ability is reflected by talking about personal answers in connection with the epidemic reality; Besides, through the comparison framework of Du Fu and Dickens submitted by the students, the teacher examines whether the students have further studied and consulted materials, and whether or not they have made progress in their comprehensive English language use ability, literature appreciation ability and cross-cultural thinking ability.

3.6. Plan of Using Teaching Materials

Textbook contents selected, integrated and applied in this unit: (1) Chapter 6 of Victorian English Literature in "A Brief History and Selected Readings of British and American Literature", Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2017, pp. 118-129. The content mainly involves the introduction of the background knowledge of the Victorian era, the definition of "critical realism", the introduction of representative writers and their representative works from Dickens to Browning, and the selection of the second chapter of "Oliver Twist". The textbook "A Brief History and Selected Readings of British and American Literature" is compiled strictly in accordance with the requirements of the Syllabus for English Majors in Colleges and Universities issued by the Ministry of Education. It takes the history of British and American literature as the main line, briefly introducing the history of British and American literature and the works of key writers, and selecting classic works or fragments for reading. The background includes the main literary trends, literary movements, representative writers and literary terms. It can be seen that this textbook integrates the history of British and American literature and the reading of classics, aiming to enable English major students to have a comprehensive understanding of the origin and development of British and American literature, and to absorb the essence of British and American culture. Thus it helps students to learn native English, to broaden their range of knowledge and to feel the charm of language during the process of reading and appreciating classical literature, as a result of which students' integrated English language use ability, literary appreciation ability, and cross-cultural ability can be improved and the integration of language and education can be realized. [3] (2) The sixth part Victorian literature in "A Brief History of English literature", published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (Liu Yiqing, et.al., 2010, pp. 219-300), mainly covers the Victorian era background, the main literary achievement, and its representative writers of overview, and plot introduction and comments in "A Tale of Two Cities". The textbook "A Brief History of English Literature" follows the principle of emphasis on the past and understatement of the present. The comment section centers around the selection of domestic controversial views, trying to stimulate learners' interest and cultivate their awareness of independent thinking, which is conducive to the realization of the integration of language and education. [4]

4. Single Period Teaching Design Scheme

4.1. Teaching Objectives

4.1.1. Specific teaching objectives of one period selected : (45 minutes)

First, Students further understand and strengthen the historical background and characteristics of the emergence of "critical realism";

Second, a "paradox" can be created by appreciating excerpts of the text;

Third, through group activities, students can summarize the Victorian era background and social problems reflected in Oliver Twist.

Fourth, after class exercises, students can further consolidate their comprehensive English language use ability, literature appreciation ability and cross-cultural thinking ability, and realize the organic

integration of language learning and educational goals.

4.1.2. The relationship between this goal and the unit teaching goal:

This goal is the lower goal and sub-goal of the unit teaching goal. The learning of this lesson only partially achieves the teaching goal of unit language and education.

4.2. Teaching process

4.2.1. The design concept of this period, the selected textbook content (such as paragraphs, exercises, etc.) and the selection basis.

The design concept of this period is a blend of CLIL, mixed teaching mode, and some of TERRIFIC in order to realize the integrated use of students' English language ability, literary appreciation, cross-cultural communication ability and the ability of comprehensive training, which leads to the realization of the purpose of education. The selected textbook content is the sixth chapter of Victorian English literature (Tian Xiangbin, Zhu Fudao, 2017, pp. 118-129). The selection basis is that the selected textbook content mainly involves the introduction of background knowledge of the Victorian era, the definition of "critical realism", the introduction of representative writers and their representative works from Dickens to Browning, and the selected fragments from the second chapter of *Oliver Twist*, and after-class exercises as well. The used materials are paragraph 1, 2 and 3 on page 118, paragraph 2 on page 119, paragraph 1, 2 and 3 on page 122, overview section on page 123 to 124, excerpts from pages 124 to 129. After class exercises are on page 129 and page 172 to 174.

4.2.2. Teaching organization process, including specific steps and activities.

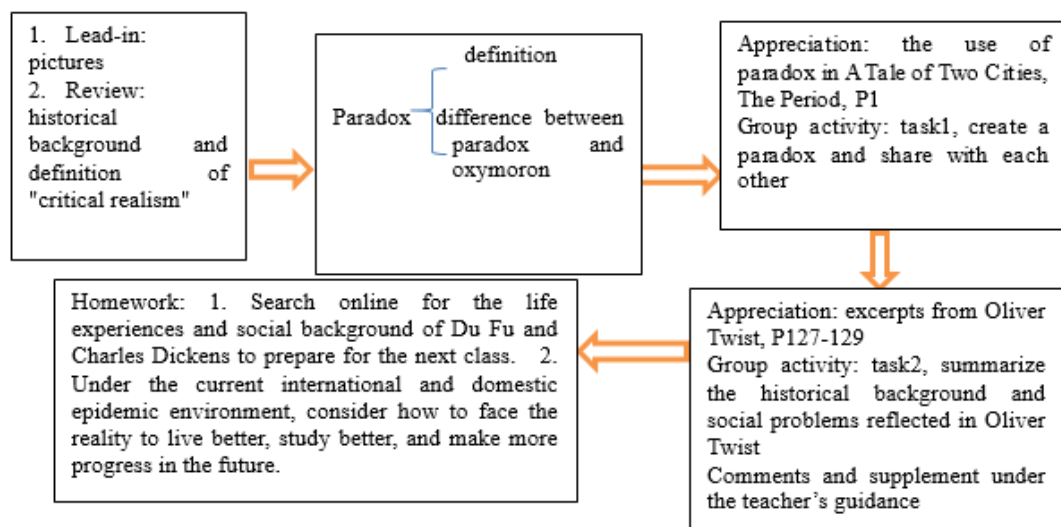


Figure 1: Mind map of teaching organization process

4.2.3. How to achieve the integration of language and education in the teaching process

First, the teacher guides the students to understand and analyze the two sides of the Victorian era, highlighting the numerous social problems that existed under its glorious appearance, and then gives a definition of "British critical realism" from the perspective of history and dialectics, and helps students to learn its representative writers and their major works as well. The teacher guides students to review the definition of "critical realism", to find out the "paradox" embodied in the beginning chapter of "A Tale of Two Cities". On the basis of it, students go through group discussion activities to share "paradox" examples they have created as a collective work, and then sum up the Victorian era background and social problems reflected in "Oliver Twist". These steps aim at cultivating students' comprehensive English language ability, literature appreciation ability and critical thinking ability. The arrangement of homework can not only further strengthen students' comprehensive English language use ability and literature appreciation ability, but also improve students' cross-cultural and realistic thinking ability, thus realizing the organic integration of language learning and educational goals.

4.3. Teaching evaluation

The evaluation of this class follows the concept of "Teacher-Student Cooperative Assessment (TSCA)". The teacher provides students with evaluation criteria and select evaluation focus and typical samples. Under the guidance of the teacher, students make cooperative evaluation on typical samples according to the focus of evaluation, and then the teacher makes evaluation, so as to realize the purpose of "promoting learning through evaluation". [5] Evaluation takes into account both in-class and after-class, online and offline, and combines formative assessment and summative assessment which tries to follow the principle of "objectivity, fairness, science, diversity and motivation". Specific aspects of investigation: 1) Whether the self-study is sufficient before class and the task of the former class has been completed or not. 2) Students' performance in this class: First, whether or not they have actively participated in and speak out while reviewing the definition of "critical realism" and analyzing the application of "Paradox" in the opening excerpt of *A Tale of Two Cities*. Second, in the group cooperation discussion, whether they have actively participated in and contributed their own views and thoughts or not. 3) Whether or not they can actively complete exercises after class and find problems in independent learning.

5. Conclusion

The Opinions of the Ministry of Education about Vigorously Promoting the Reform of Teacher Education Curriculum (2011) put forward that the teacher education curriculum should innovate its concept, reform the teaching content of the curriculum, develop high-quality curriculum resources, improve teaching methods, and build a high-level teaching staff. In this context, the teaching reform of English major should keep pace with the time and make due contributions to the teaching reform in colleges and universities. In addition, facing constant compression of the school class time, a large quantity of literature information, the present situation of the students' lack of interest, and the unsatisfied teaching effect, this case design is expected to provide a good teaching template for teachers who are now teaching English literature courses, to update their teaching concept and teaching mode. As a result these teachers can try to employ the modern information technology and effectively integrate the critical elements into their teaching which finally leads to stimulate students' interest in literature learning, to improve the teacher's teaching efficiency, and to enhance students' learning ability, practical ability and innovation ability as well.

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