

Research on Blended Teaching Model of College English Based on SPOC

Yu Chen

Jilin International Studies University, No.3658, Jingyue, Changchun, 130117, Jilin, China

Abstract: *In the context of globalization and informatization, college English courses need continuous innovation and reform. Among them, SPOC has attracted much attention because of its efficient use of high-quality MOOC course resources to serve conventional teaching. Combining the features of college English courses, this paper establishes a blended teaching model of college English based on SPOC. This model mainly includes three stages: knowledge transfer before class, knowledge internalization in class, knowledge consolidation after class. For college foreign language learners, this model effectively improves verbal expression ability, cultivates independent learning and cooperative ability, and inspires innovation consciousness, which is worthy of further promotion in college English teaching.*

Keywords: *Blended Teaching Model; College English; SPOC*

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the using of information technique gives the conventional educational context vigor and vitality. Due to the rapid growth of network technique, MOOC is widely used around the world. MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) has met the needs of learners at different levels with its characteristics of massive, open and online, and has been praised by many educational scholars. However, with the deepening of the use of MOOC, some problems have been found in MOOC learning, such as low rate of course completing, lack of teacher roles, and unitary teaching mode[1]. Aiming at these problems, a series of theoretical and practical researches have been carried out in educational context, and a novel teaching model—SPOC teaching model has been proposed. Its use effectively innovates the teaching means, updates the content of courses and upgrades the teaching quality. College English courses, as one of the important basic disciplines of higher education, need to update and optimize the teaching mode in time. So how to use SPOC wisely is an important issue that needs to be addressed. The research shows that the mixture of online teaching and conventional teaching can effectively meet students' personalized learning needs and improve the overall teaching quality[2]. The blended teaching model of college English based on SPOC can effectively combine the advantages of online learning resource platform and conventional classroom. Therefore, by constructing this teaching model, this paper hopes to provide a reference for further promoting the deep combination of information technique and college English courses.

2. An Overview of SPOC

MOOC and SPOC, both of which allow students to take classes online, are popular online education models, but they are quite different. MOOC stands for "Massive Open Online courses," which is characterized by its "massive" and "open". Students can break the restrict of time and space, utilize resources learning resources and enjoy knowledge sharing from all over the world. However, Professor Cheng Jiangang[3] believes that although MOOC courses are of high quality, MOOC is still only the opening of courses rather than the opening of education. For example, the teacher cannot answer questions for the students in time during the learning process, there will be a certain time lag. Or the course completion rate is low because students can be easily distracted and can not concentrate on the MOOC course learning.

The drawbacks of MOOC have led to the creation of a counterpart, called SPOC (Small Private Online Course). Professor Armando Fox[4] proposed a novel concept after MOOC, SPOC, called "Post-MOOC". SPOC stands for "small, private online courses". "Small" means the limited size with a small number of students; "private" indicates that courses are only accessible to a specific range of

learners, setting access conditions. The words "small" and "private" are in contrast to the "massive" and "open" of MOOC (Massive Open Online courses). SPOC comes into being in the procedures of the practical teaching of MOOC. SPOC can make up for the shortcomings of MOOC to a certain extent, and is the inheritance, perfection and transcendence of MOOC.

As for the specific definition of SPOC teaching mode, domestic and foreign scholars have actively carried out relevant research. There are two types: one is that SPOC is a course that optimizes campus teaching with MOOC, and the other is that SPOC is a privatized small-scale online course. The former type is represented by Professor Armando Fox, the founder of SPOC, who believes that the purpose of SPOC is to enable MOOC resources to be applied to small-scale user groups, mainly for schools or even separate classes, and mainly in the form of using MOOC to assist classroom teaching in conventional classes. The second definition is represented by the Jon Baggaley of Athabasca University, who believes that SPOC is a private course of limited size and should be between dozens to hundreds of people. At the same time, learners need to meet certain conditions to access, so it has the privacy[5].

There are also two models proposed by different scholars on the teaching practice of SPOC. The first one is proposed by Marco Piccioni et al. They utilize SPOC as a supplement to conventional classroom instruction. The second is Sébastien et al. 's approach to the flipped classroom. Students need to learn SPOC before class, so that students can focus more on project learning and group cooperation to solve problems, so as to gain a deeper understanding of knowledge.

As far as SPOC teaching experiments are concerned, there are many prestigious universities participating. Among them, the University of California, Berkeley's senior software engineering course is more representative. Professor Armando Fox[4] created a MOOC course and used materials from that MOOC to create a SPOC course for his own students; in 2013, Harvard University conducted SPOC practice on edX for three courses, including the copyright law and architectural hypothesis and the Python computer programming language course of MIT. In China, Tsinghua University is the first university to introduce SPOC. Tsinghua University introduced the "Cloud Computing and Software Engineering" course from the University of California, Berkeley in 2013. Subsequently, other universities in China also began to try to teach SPOC. For example, Zhejiang University offers courses such as "C Language Programming" and Nanjing University offers courses such as "Circuit Principles". At the same time, other MOOC platforms in China, such as Xuetang Online, China University MOOC, Guokr.com MOOC Institute, etc., have also begun to actively transition to SPOC.

In a word, college English, as a practical and basic discipline, is closely combined with the development of society and the market. At present, the teaching model of college English needs to keep pace with the time, constantly reform the teaching model and enhance the teaching quality to meet the request of individual students. SPOC refines the role of the teacher by integrating online MOOC courses with conventional classroom models to teach small groups of students. SPOC can achieve students' personalized independent learning, improve course completion rate, and improve teaching quality and effects. Consequently, it is a major task of college English teaching reform to make more powerful use of SPOC platform and try to construct a blended teaching model of college English in line with learning situation, and solve many drawbacks in nowadays.

3. Blended Teaching Model

Blended teaching mode is the integration of online education and conventional classroom, giving full play to the superiority of digital learning and conventional teaching. It not only enables teachers to take a leading role in guiding, motivating and supervising the teaching procedures, but also fully gives expression to the activity, enthusiasm and creativity of learners as learning subjects, greatly improving teaching efficiency and learning effect.

Over the past two decades, it has gone through three stages before becoming a novel trend in learning and learning. In the first phase, blended learning began to attract the interest of scholars at home and abroad. At the time, blending learning is considered as a integration of two historically independent teaching modes: traditional face-to-face teaching and online learning, which combine a certain proportion of the two. At this stage, the emphasis is on the use of information technology in teaching. In the second stage, blended learning is considered an independent model rather than a transitional model. And set the proportion of online learning, focus on teaching strategies, teaching methods, teaching design, etc. In the last phase, its definition was updated and refined. In addition, it begins to attach importance to learners, including their changes, experiences, etc[6]. In blended learning, learners can schedule their own learning, teachers can instruct and monitor students with

effect, improve the lack of conventional teaching, and utilize multiple evaluation methods to improve efficiency and effect.

In the Internet era, blended teaching model selects effective methods of knowledge transmission according to teaching content, students' actual needs, learning environment and other factors, combine various information technologies with teaching, changes the conventional teaching approach, and forms the blended teaching mode.

4. The Significance of Blended Teaching Model of College English based on SPOC

Compared with conventional college English teaching, SPOC has the following advantages:

4.1. Enhance students' participation in the course learning

From the perspective of learning motivation, students who participate in SPOC with stronger learning motivation than others. Armando Fox [4] believed that SPOC enriched teachers' teaching methods and enhanced students' participation in curriculum learning. At the same time, SPOC's immersive self-learning atmosphere can create a supportive language learning environment for learners, enable them to combine multimedia learning methods, obtain a better learning experience, and effectively improve students' learning motivation.

From the perspective of teachers, teachers can utilize SPOC teaching mode to conduct hierarchical management according to students' real learning state, carry out targeted teaching and assign offline learning tasks, so as to fully ensure that the teaching design can cater the actual situation and students' needs. As the teaching work is more targeted, so the teaching effect will continue to improve.

From the perspective of teaching resources, conventional classroom teaching mode is limited by volume of teaching materials, its content is relatively limited, and the knowledge cannot update in time. The quality of college English teaching is affected by the outdated teaching materials and the lack of language and cultural environment. SPOC, based on the abundant teaching resources in the Internet, can provide teachers with the channel to collect educational materials and maximize the reasonable utilization of teaching resources, which has certain advantages over conventional teaching approach. In accordance with the teaching progress, students' learning ability and needs, teachers can collect network resources, integrate and apply them to enrich the teaching content to a large extent, and solve the problem of conventional teaching limited by textbooks and auxiliary materials. In terms of teaching methods, SPOC can change the hidebound teaching form of conventional classroom theoretical knowledge explanation, meet the needs of learners' personalized learning, and aroused their interest in learning.

4.2. Redefine and Improve Teacher Identity.

Professor Kang Yeqin of Tsinghua University[8] believes that SPOC provides a sustainable development model of MOOC, redefines the role of teachers and makes up for the lack of teaching approaches and principles caused by MOOC. At the same time, conventional classroom teaching relies on the fixed content of textbooks and auxiliary materials, and the expansion of knowledge is often based on the content of textbooks. In this teaching mode, students can only passively receive knowledge and lack independent learning experience. Although, teachers are the leader of the classroom and the supplier of knowledge, they could be limited by the textbook and syllabus. In SPOC, teachers are transformed into the real master of the classroom. Teachers can collect and integrate rich teaching resources in the network according to the teaching progress, students' learning ability and needs, and extricate the conventional classroom teaching relying on fixed content of textbooks. And students can utilize offline learning time to optimize integrated online educational resources for independent learning. The college English teaching model based on SPOC can give priority to effective classroom teaching time and fragmented after-class time, help students to further master English knowledge, stimulate learners' learning motivation in English learning through different forms of education, and promote the reconstruction of teacher identity.

Blended Teaching Model of College English based on SPOC is the combination of online teaching and conventional classroom, which is of historic significance for improving the efficiency and quality of teaching. In a word, in today's college English teaching practice, emphasis should be placed on the use of SPOC teaching model, both in terms of teaching resources and teaching feasibility.

5. Current Situation of SPOC Teaching Mode in College English Teaching

In the context of the rapid development of information technology, SPOC teaching mode has produced an important influence on the conventional teaching ideology, which also requests teachers. However, some teachers still adopt the teaching mode in previous and fail to flexibly utilize SPOC teaching mode. As a result, the effect of college English teaching activities is insufficient and it is difficult to cater students' needs. This demands teachers not to be conventional, but to actively carry out blended teaching of college English. For example, they can utilize scientific and effective videos to carry out relevant teaching, strengthen students' comprehensive English literacy, optimize classroom teaching time, and explain courseware and relevant knowledge. At the same time, some universities fail to support and encourage the practice of SPOC in college English teaching due to insufficient resources. All these limit the realization of college English teaching objectives, resulting in unsatisfactory effects of English teaching and hindering the development of college English teaching [7]. Therefore, this paper aims to develop an effective blended college English teaching process based on SPOC, which cannot be separated from the help of teachers and schools.

6. The Process of College English Teaching Model under SPOC Platform

The college English teaching process based on SPOC is divided into three parts: knowledge transfer before class, knowledge internalization in class, knowledge consolidation after class. In the pre-class knowledge transfer stage, students can raise questions after learning micro-class independently. In the stage of knowledge internalization, learners work together in groups and through collaborative exploration to analyze and solve problems. Finally, in the stage of knowledge consolidation after class, students can reflect and evaluate their performance in class and online courses. The specific design is shown in Figure 1.

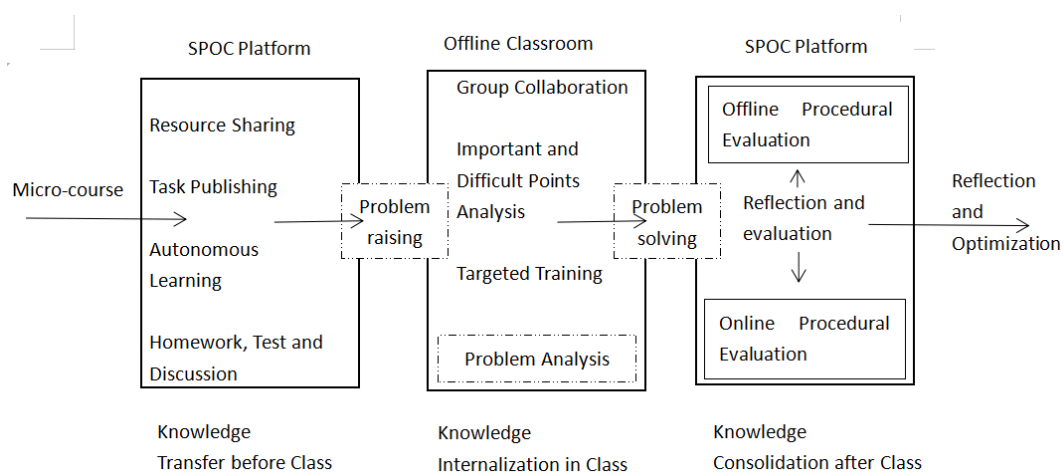


Figure 1: Process of Blended College English Teaching Mode Based on SPOC

6.1. Knowledge Transfer before Class

6.1.1. Design and sharing of micro-class resources.

Pre-class preparation is a considerable way to optimize the teaching approach. According to the syllabus, teaching calendar, teaching materials, teaching purposes and teaching content of college English courses, teachers collect relevant video resources through SPOC platform, integrate appropriate video resources, design, produce and share micro-class videos, so as to facilitate students' self-learning before class. Teaching videos should follow certain course module design and be targeted and forward-looking. The design duration of micro-class videos should not be too long, limited to 20 minutes. Fragmented time is convenient for language learners to learn at any time and any space. In addition to micro-class resources, teachers should also upload relevant PPT, course resources and extracurricular resources to the website in time.

6.1.2. Self-learning micro-class videos.

Teachers need to release relevant learning tasks according to the learning content of micro-class.

Learners take the initiative to transfer knowledge by watching videos, participating in online assignments, tests and discussions as required by teachers. There are two ways to complete the task: individual completion and online collaboration. According to their foundation of learning and studying resources provided by SPOC, they should check the gaps and make up for the omissions. Students with weak foundation of learning take notice of the study and consolidation of basic knowledge, while students with a good foundation of learning utilize online resources to deepen their understanding of the text topic and expand their knowledge. The completion of the task can help students systematically summarize the learning focus and prepare for class. After students finish micro-class learning, teachers need to track students' learning process from the SPOC to help learners find problems; teachers can also utilize the data analysis function of SPOC to update the student online learning status, classify and sort out the difficulties encountered by students in the online learning procedures, adjust the teaching content and methods, optimize the teaching activities, and make targeted offline course design.

6.2. Knowledge Internalization in Class

After the micro-class learning, learners raise questions to clarify the difficulties and interests. In the classroom, the focus shifts to problem solving, having effective interactions and completing real tasks. Teachers can check whether students have mastered the knowledge in the micro-class video by answering questions and taking tests. At the same time, according to the platform data feedback and the learning feedback of learners, the teacher guides the grouping according to the principle of "inter-group homogeneity and intra-group heterogeneity", divides the class into groups composed of 4-5 people for group collaboration and independent exploration, and promotes effective discussion and communication between teachers and students. After groups analyze the problem, the teacher can carry out targeted training to help students understand deeper. Through these teaching procedures, the correlation and coherence between online learning and classroom learning are enhanced, and students complete internalization of language knowledge and further improve their language skills.

6.3. Knowledge Consolidation after Class

In the blended college English teaching model based on SPOC, the evaluation is mixed and varied. Procedural evaluation is mainly divided into online and offline parts. After class, teachers can conduct online procedural evaluation on students' online learning situation (learning frequency, learning time span, video viewing rate, discussion participation, etc.), online homework quality, online unit test results and other aspects through the big data feedbacks from the SPOC platform. After class, teachers will upload group or individual works in the form of videos, audio, text, to the internet for joint evaluation by teachers and students, achieving offline procedural evaluation. Teachers can conduct demonstrative evaluation of achievement according to clear and reasonable evaluation standards and guide learners to conduct self-evaluation and learning reflection on their own and group achievements, so as to complete the consolidation of knowledge. Members of each group cooperate to explore according to the evaluation criteria, and realize the reflection, mutual evaluation and knowledge expansion between groups. Teachers can also reflect and improve their design based on the teaching situation, providing a basis for optimizing the SPOC based college English teaching model.

7. Conclusion and Prospect

With the development of education information, the reform of college English needs to further update the teaching concept and teaching model. The research on blended teaching mode of college English based on SPOC provides a novel path for college English reform. It can make effective use of excellent MOOC resources, make up for the deficiency of MOOC by using the classroom, and reflects the teaching concept of student-oriented and teacher-oriented. In teaching practice and theoretical research, the author will strive to implement the above goals, and also hope that the exploration of this teaching mode can bring some inspiration to the reform of college English.

However, from the perspective of future development, although SPOC has great advantages over MOOC, which can make up for the shortcomings of MOOC to some extent, both of them, as information-based teaching modes, need strong support of information-based teaching environment. For universities with relatively backward teaching equipment, such as classrooms without Wifi and students without mobile electronic devices, how to truly implement SPOC is worth further study. In addition, blended teaching model of College English based on SPOC requires students to have great independent learning ability. Therefore, how to improve students' autonomous learning ability and how

to make them adapt to it is worth thinking about.

Acknowledgement

Fund Projects: This study was supported by a grant from 2022 Jilin Provincial Higher Education Association Higher Education Research Key Topic "A Study on the Influencing Factors and Interventions of Chinese College Students' Blended English Learning Adaptation Based on MOOC" (Grant Number: JGJX2022D335); 2022 Jilin International Studies University Campus Level Teaching and Research Project Key Topic "Research on the Influencing Factors and Interventions of Blended English Learning Adaptation in MOOC Environment in Universities"; Jilin International Studies University's 2022 Campus level Research Project Key Topic "Research on the Hybrid Teaching Model of Foreign Language SPOC in Universities in the Post MOOC Era (Grant Number: JW2022JSKYB016); 2022 Jilin Provincial Department of Education's Collaborative Education Project "Research on the Blended Foreign Language Teaching Model Based on MOOC+SPOC in the Digital Era" (Grant Number: Ji Jiao Gao [2022] No. 19)

References

- [1] Du S. C., & Fu Z. T (2016). "MOOC Based Blended Learning and Its Empirical Research." *China Educational Technology* No. 359. 12: 129-133+145
- [2] Li F. Q., & Han X. L (2017). "The construction and demonstration of blending teaching quality evaluation system." *China Educational Technology*. 11:108-113.
- [3] Cheng J. G. (2013), "Dialectical Analysis of MOOCs and Research on U-MOOCs" *Distance Education in China*.
- [4] Fox A. (2013). "Viewpoint: From MOOCs to SPOCs" *Communications of the ACM* 56-12.
- [5] Huang H., & Xiong Q (2016). "Exploration of SPOC Foreign Language Teaching Model Based on the Perspective of "Post Method" Theory." *Technology Enhanced Foreign Languages*. 4:6.
- [6] Feng X. Y. (2018), Wang R. X., & Wu, Y. J. "A literature review on blended learning: based on analytical framework of blended learning." *Journal of Distance Education* 36. 03:13-24. doi: 10.15881/j.cnki.cn33-1304/g4.2018.03.002.
- [7] Ni J. J (2020). "The Path of Introducing Intangible Cultural Heritage Projects into English Teaching in Vocational Colleges—Taking Jinhua Region as an Example." *Journal of Wenzhou Vocational and Technical College* 20. 2: 6
- [8] Kang Y. Q (2014). "The Post MOOC Era" of Online Education - SPOC Analysis." *Tsinghua Journal of Education* 1:9.