Exploration and Application of SPOC-based Blended Teaching Mode in Comprehensive English Course

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Abstract. As the new direction of education reform in the "Internet +" epoch, the SPOC-based blended teaching mode can enrich the teaching content and meet the learning needs. Based on the SPOC teaching concept, this paper studies the advantages of the blended teaching mode and explores its application in the teaching of Comprehensive English course for English majors. Through teaching practice, it is found that the SPOC-based blended teaching mode can improve students' enthusiasm for learning English, enhance their learning interaction, and finally optimize the effectiveness of English teaching. In view of this, through the study of the blended teaching mode in English teaching practice, this paper aims to provide useful enlightenment for the future implementation of SPOC-based blended teaching mode.

1. Introduction
In the information age, SPOC (Small Private Online Course) is also called "post-MOOC era", which was first proposed and used by Professor Armand Fox of the University of California, Berkeley[1]. The object of MOOC teaching is all the social learners, which makes it difficult to achieve the desired effect of stratified education. Besides, MOOC learning has no threshold and supervision, relying on the learner's own plan and consciousness, all of which lead to the low completion rate of MOOC teaching. For these reasons, the emergence of SPOC becomes an innovation of the "Internet +" teaching model, and it is a new form of information-based teaching. Meanwhile, it requires teachers to have a good understanding of the students who choose the course, which can strengthen the management and supervision of the students, making SPOC an effective tool for improving teaching.

The blended teaching mode is a mixture of online and offline teaching, i.e. a combination of traditional teaching and networked teaching. Besides, it aims to deal with the relationship between independent learning and teacher-directed learning[2], which becomes an important research direction of current teaching innovation. In the blended teaching, students can arrange their own learning while teachers can effectively guide and monitor students, improve the deficiencies of traditional teaching, and use a variety of evaluation methods to enhance teaching efficiency and teaching results. Through this "online + offline" teaching, the advantages of online teaching and traditional teaching are combined organically, and the learner's learning can be developed in depth.

As the main subject course for the first and second year of college English majors, "Comprehensive English" course aims to lay a solid foundation for students to enter the higher grades and adapt to the needs of China's opening up. Therefore, this paper attempts to explore the application of the SPOC-based blended teaching mode in the teaching of Comprehensive English under the guidance of SPOC teaching theory, ultimately enriching the content of English teaching and providing reference for the reform of education and teaching in similar universities as well.
2. Advantages of SPOC-based Blended Teaching Mode

In SPOC-based blended teaching mode, teachers can use a method of combing online and offline teaching to achieve a blended teaching. The whole teaching process can adopt the concept of flipped classroom teaching, asking students to preview through the network equipment before class and answer the questions. In class, students can discuss with the teachers on those questions, complete the tasks with classmates, and make up the deficiencies of online learning. Meanwhile, teachers can give students a comprehensive assessment according to their performance in class and the completion of online work. All in all, compared with the traditional teaching methods, SPOC-based blended teaching mode has the following advantages:

2.1 It is Beneficial to the Cultivation of Students' Self-learning Ability

In the blended teaching mode, students have more freedom to learn independently. They can choose the time and place suitable for their own study and the appropriate learning content on the SPOC platform and master the learning progress. Besides, the number of viewings and the speed of playback can also be controlled, and suggested materials can also be chosen according to their own situation. In the classroom, students can work with the group to discuss problems that are not solved online. This improvement approach can achieve optimal teaching results, free students from the constraints of regular classroom teaching time, arrange their own learning progress according to their needs, and provide learners with an interactive platform to get immediate feedback, which could consequently cultivate learners' self-learning ability.

2.2 It is Beneficial to the Improvement of Teaching Efficiency and Quality

With the automatic online scoring feature of the SPOC platform, teachers can reduce a large number of tasks of correcting homework. They can visually and comprehensively see each student's answers and mistakes, and explain in a targeted manner in class. Via the network, teachers can also supervise students to complete learning tasks, strengthen daily teaching management, and reuse teaching resources. From the situation of "more instruction and less practice" to the suggestion of "less instruction and more practice", this is also an important strategy for the transformation and optimization of the blended teaching mode[3]. Besides, students can also raise their questions in the classroom so that teachers can answer questions in time, which can save time and avoid a lot of repetitive teaching work, and teaching efficiency and quality would significantly improved.

2.3 It is Beneficial to the Enhancement of Students' Interest in Learning

Different from the traditional way of taking test scores as the only evaluation method, SPOC-based blended teaching mode requires teachers to fully take students’ non-intellectual factors into account. During the teaching, teachers need to discover the merits of students from multiple dimensions, encourage them to make progress, and help them build confidence. Because the "Internet +" blended teaching is an open self-organizing ecosystem and the whole process is learner-centered, its features of openness and self-learning break the original traditional teaching mode and structure, making learners more self-selective[4]. Researches on SPOC further show that SPOC is more attractive than traditional classrooms, and it inspires students’ learning interest and stimulates their participation.

2.4 It is Beneficial to the Self-study of Students with Different Levels

Students can preview the contents on the SPOC platform beforehand and follow their own learning “rhythm” to maintain a steady pace in their language development. That is to say, they can make a step-by-step schedule in accordance with their own time and strength. Besides, based on students’ various information including their previous course grades, past performance, personality, merits and demerits, and so on, teachers can truly conduct classification teaching to facilitate according to students’ aptitudes and grasp their demands at any time to promptly adjust the follow-up teaching content and progress, as well as taking care of different levels of student learning needs.
3. Application Practice of SPOC-based Blended Teaching in Comprehensive English Course

In this part, the author will discuss the application of blended teaching mode based on SPOC environment in Comprehensive English course. As the constructor of the course and the supporter of students' learning, teachers are required to have rich teaching experience, enough time and energy, pay attention to each student's learning situation in time and teach them in accordance with their aptitudes because students are the center of learning activities. The specific application process is as follows (Figure 1):

3.1 Preparation Stage

3.1.1 Materials Uploading. Before class, teachers need to upload online materials, including micro videos, PPT, course tests, extra-curricular information and so on. Micro video should not be too long for 5-10 minutes. The content of PPT should not be tedious, so that students can grasp the key points of learning. Furthermore, the curriculum can also be composed of several modules according to the knowledge structure. Each module can be divided into a number of small knowledge points[5]. Then teachers upload the corresponding materials by taking those knowledge points as the index. At the same time, curriculum module design is an important part of network teaching, which plays a vital role in teaching. Thus, it must be targeted and forward-looking in design.

3.1.2 Student Course Selecting. After uploading materials, teachers should set up courses on the SPOC platform and screen out the students who are qualified to select courses through pre-test or course passwords. The students who have reached the requirements can learn the course; otherwise they can only audit the online course and participate in interaction and communication without obtaining the corresponding credits. During the first week of the course, teachers should lead students to learn the operation of the SPOC platform and answer their questions. It is necessary to actively guide students to take the initiative to participate in the course selection, so that the courses selected by the students are close to the professional and future work needs, and fully motivate the students to learn.

3.2 Implementation Stage

At this stage, teachers release the teaching task on the SPOC platform, and students receive the notification and arrange the study independently. Besides, students can make full use of their...
fragmented time, integrate the received fragments information, and communicate with teachers on the platform. They can also perform online scoring operations by watching micro video and PPT, and consult teachers by mail, WeChat, QQ and so on. Based on the completion of students' online homework, teachers collect and prepare targeted teaching contents.

In class, students show their homework and raise their own questions. They can be divided into groups while teachers perform as the leaders and assistators of the whole learning process to answer students' questions and check their completion of learning tasks. For example, teachers should make full use of multimedia technology and network resources, expand new learning content, increase the interest of human knowledge and learning content, and guide students to realize the "human-computer interaction" design teaching mode, so as to improve the efficiency of English teaching on the SPOC teaching platform, and make students achieve good learning results. Finally, stage test and evaluation can be decided according to the process of online learning.

3.3 Evaluation Stage
In the SPOC-based blended teaching mode, evaluation is mixed and various. First, students receive a peer assessment from their group members based on their learning effect, learning ability, cooperation ability, emotional value and so on. Then at the end of the course, a comprehensive assessment would be given by teachers with regard of students’ attendance rate, completion of the practice, participation of the class, evaluation of peers and final results of the course examination[6]. In this way, formative assessment and summative assessment are combined to calculate the final course performance of students according to different weights (Fig. 2).

![Figure 2. Evaluation in SPOC-based blended teaching mode.](image)

4. Characteristics of SPOC-based Blended Teaching Mode
Through the practical teaching, it is found that the application of the SPOC-based blended teaching mode in colleges and universities can expand the teaching content, stimulate students’ interest in learning, mobilize their enthusiasm for learning, and improve the teaching efficiency and effectiveness of various subjects. However, in the application process, the following characteristics should be grasped.

4.1 Adhere to the Characteristics of Human Nature
Specifically, it is student-centered. The blended teaching mode needs to satisfy students’ individualized learning, and make them become the new force to promote teaching innovation and
play the main role in teaching. Meanwhile, students are welcome to participate in the curriculum design, so that teachers can meet the needs of students and completely direct their learning enthusiasm. For example, teachers can share their teaching PPTs with recorded English video or spoken dialogue on SPOC platform, allowing students to watch, practice and give feedback online so as to mobilize their activity and highlight their dominant position in learning.

4.2 Adhere to the Characteristics of Integration
It means teachers should stick to the organic integration of teaching online and offline. This is the fundamental guarantee for the implementation of blended teaching. Organic integration is to seamlessly connect each online and offline teaching procedure, to make the teaching content and activities coherent and orderly, and to truly realize the flexible and diverse teaching methods by sharing the learning results on SPOC platform. The effective consolidation of online learning and offline teachers’ instruction can maximize the benefits of teaching and help students learn the knowledge, which is also superior to the main characteristics of classroom teaching.

4.3 Adhere to the Characteristics of Interaction
It is to maintain constant interaction and communication among teachers, students and the classroom environment. With the reason that English teaching is an art emphasizing communication and cooperation between teachers and students and among students, it is required that teachers should use these online platforms to conduct interactive teaching with students online. Likewise, students can use these platforms to make inquiries to teachers online at any time. They can also discuss with their classmates online and share their experiences in English in a bid to make a further development of their language ability. Furthermore, through interactive learning online, students can better and faster complete the learning tasks, and promote the progress of teaching[7].

4.4 Adhere to the Characteristics of Systematicity
It is to adhere to the complementary advantages of traditional learning and online learning. For both teachers and students, it is quite important to realize that it is not simply to mix traditional classrooms with online learning. Instead, online learning should be mixed from the fields of teaching theory, teaching environment, teaching design and teaching resources, and pay attention to its systematicity. In the process of mixing, we should pay attention to the leading role of the teachers in the inspiration, guidance and monitoring process, and also develop the initiative role of the learners in the whole learning process. Only students’ enthusiasm and creativity are fully utilized, can teachers achieve the advantages of blended teaching and realize its optimization.

5. Conclusion
The application of SPOC-based blended teaching mode breaks the traditional teacher-centered teaching mode in China, which reflects the dominant position of learners in the whole teaching process. As a new teaching mode, there are few studies on it at home and abroad. From the point of view of SPOC, this paper studies and discusses the advantages and specific practices of blended teaching mode, which can improve students’ independent learning ability and teachers’ teaching efficiency and quality. However, due to the limitation of conditions, the research on the SPOC-based blended teaching mode is still at the initial stage, and further attempts and explorations are needed. Along with the development of society and the progress of science and technology in our country, under the circumstances of “Internet +”, it is necessary to make the blended teaching mode truly become the new normal for college teaching, and its popularization will bring innovation of the teaching reform and progress of education in China.

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