

# Study and Practice of Blended Teaching in Adult Higher Education

—Taking the Course of "Management Science" as an Example

Yi Li\*

College of Continuing Education,  
Shanghai Polytechnic University,  
Shanghai, China

Yihui Shen

College of Continuing Education,  
Shanghai Polytechnic University,  
Shanghai, China

**Abstract**—The proposal of blended teaching mode poses a severe challenge to the traditional classroom teaching mode. Therefore, through expounding the connotation of blended teaching mode and the current teaching situation and problems in adult education, this paper takes the "Management Science" as an example to introduce the practice process of blended teaching mode in the aspects of curriculum design, network platform construction, and concrete implementation of hybrid teaching, as well as assessment methods, etc.

**Keywords**—Online and Offline; Blended Teaching Mode; Management Science

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the Internet plus era, its influence on the education industry has also begun to emerge. In 2012, China entered the construction boom in the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). Basically, compared with traditional courses, online courses are not easily affected by region, space and progress. Consequently, the attempt and application of various online teaching methods have entered a vigorous development period. Specifically, online education can not only solve the time and space constraints, but also adapt to the personalized learning characteristics of the present students. However, there are still many problems in online teaching, such as insufficient supervision on students, and students are easily interrupted by various factors during the learning process. In a word, online or offline learning has certain limitations. Therefore, a learning mode combining online and offline, which is the blended teaching mode, came into being.

B. Joyce and M. Well from the United States first pointed out that the teaching mode is a paradigm or plan that constitutes courses and assignments, selects textbooks, and prompts teacher activities. In essence, the original intention of the teaching mode to be introduced into the teaching theory is to establish the basic structure of various types of teaching activities under the guidance of certain teaching ideas or teaching theories and to reflect the procedural strategic system of the teaching process.

Abandoning the traditional classroom teaching mode, blended teaching proposes a teaching mode combining the online and offline education that integrates modern information technology on the Internet platform. The basic idea of this

mode is that the knowledge transferred in the traditional teaching is done online, while internalization and migration of knowledge is done offline through in-class teaching and after-school expansion. Based on this, students can independently study through the micro-videos, courseware and other resources online. They complete the online testing and online homework just like passing the level, as well as interact with teachers and students through Q&A online to improve the study. This kind of teaching mode not only completely subverts the traditional teaching process, the theory which regards teachers and teaching materials as the center of the education and students as the object, but also creates a new teaching mode which makes the students as the main part and teachers as the leading part, so as to cultivate students' autonomous learning ability, inquiry and innovation skills, and improve the quality of teaching in adult education as well as accomplish the co-construction and sharing excellent teaching resources. (Fig.1)

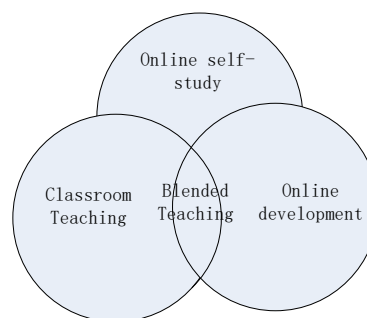


Fig. 1. The Blended Teaching Mode

## II. THE CURRENT SITUATION AND ISSUES OF ADULT EDUCATION

In recent years, China's education has been developed; especially adult education has achieved remarkable results. Generally, adult education has a series of distinctive characteristics on the national education objects, the universality of fields, the diversity of contents, and the continuity of the process as well as the practical effectiveness of knowledge for work, study and life. These characteristics

Higher continuing education teaching mode reform and teaching resource construction project (phase ii) Shanghai Polytechnic University.A30NH190719

closely conform to the concepts of "Education for All" and "Lifelong Education", making adult education an important process of lifelong education practice. However, there are still many problems in the process of development in adult education, which mainly comes from students, teaching mode, teaching platform and so on. Therefore, only by recognizing the problems clearly can we better solve the problems on the basis of the current situation, so as to promote the development of adult education.

#### *A. Current Situation Analysis of the students in Adult Higher Education*

At this moment, not only the number of students of Adult Higher Education has decreased but also the quality has declined. The main reason lies in the fact that the compensation education of the academic qualifications that have been implemented in China for more than 20 years, which has made the knowledge gap of the previous generation, gets filled. In addition, due to the continuous development of ordinary colleges and universities, many secondary schools have been upgraded to higher vocational colleges. These higher vocational colleges continue to expand enrollment and lower the admissions criteria, which in turn leads some potential students in adult higher education to turn to ordinary colleges and universities. After the expanded enrollment of general higher education in China in 1999, the gross enrollment rate of higher education has increased year by year. As of 2016, the gross enrollment rate of higher education in China has reached 42.7%. Under the background of such educational development, there will be fewer and fewer students for adult education. Compared with the past, the quality of students will be lower. Therefore, the greater the challenge the adult education faces with. The primary problem is that the historical debts of academic qualifications are becoming less, and those who receive adult education have a larger age span and a more complicated structure. The weaker the learning ability, the lower the learning interest students got. Among them, some people do not know what they need to learn at all, while others know their shortcomings, but it is difficult for them to accurately describe their specific needs. Even if they have defined their needs, they still lack the ability to find and meet their needs. This is bound to form a vicious circle. At the same time, due to work constraints, these students do not have a fixed time to come to school for education. The contradiction between work and study further intensifies the difficulties in the study. The characteristics of modern society can be shown in the young people's constant use of mobile phones, their strong self-awareness and willingness to accept new things.

#### *B. Teaching Characteristics and issues in Adult Education*

At present, the vast majority of adult education still adopts the traditional teachers' classroom teaching mode, which has the following disadvantages:

First of all, it cannot meet the differentiated and personalized needs of students.

In the traditional classroom teaching mode, teachers are faced with different educated objects, while the teaching contents and teaching methods are unified. However, cognitive

level, acceptance ability, learning habits, interests and hobbies of students are quite different. It can be seen that this kind of teaching mode gives students an invisible coercive force, without taking into account their own differences. Therefore, student's personalized needs are difficult to meet, thus inhibiting students' learning enthusiasm to various degrees.

Second, the development of students' exploration and innovation ability has been limited. During the process of using the classroom to implement teaching, teachers basically adopt the indoctrination teaching method and ignore the independent activities of the students in the classroom, forming the antagonistic relations between the subject and object of "teaching" and "learning" between teachers and students. Specifically, teachers control the whole classroom, and it is difficult to give full play to students' initiative and subjectivity. Certainly, limiting the effective stimulation of students' participation consciousness will reduce the teaching effect, and cannot ensure students' learning effect in the classroom, thus seriously affecting the cultivation of students' inquiry and innovation ability.

Third, classroom teaching mode is limited by time and place. Usually, a class has 45 minutes. However, according to relevant research, it is shown that people's concentration time is only 12-15 minutes at most. In other words, students only have more than 10 minutes of continuous concentration during the 45 minutes of classroom teaching, while the learning efficiency for the rest of the time is extremely low. In addition, people's cognitive load also has a certain bottom line. In a certain period of time, one can only remember or understand 2-3 information points, while the contents taught by a teacher in a class far exceeds 3 or more information modules. Therefore, students cannot guarantee the learning effect under overload, thus hindering the learning efficiency. With the end of class teaching, the communication and interaction between teachers and students has also been interrupted. Moreover, the limitation of learning time and place also makes it impossible for students to realize the continuity of the learning process in and out of class. This, in turn, leads to the lack of timely interaction and information feedback between teachers and students, teachers' inability to track students' learning status, and the increased difficulty of students' reflection and expansion after class.

Fourth, there is the one-sidedness of the application of informationalized teaching methods. In the general environment of the Internet plus, various modern information tools are increasingly popular. Therefore, the application of information technology to assist traditional teaching is the main direction of teaching reform at present. However, during the process of the actual application and operation, teachers simply regard it as an auxiliary teaching tool and a beneficial supplement to teaching methods. There is no denying the fact that it is indeed of great help to classroom teaching, with changing the previous single teaching method and enlivening the classroom atmosphere. Nevertheless, there has been no qualitative breakthrough in teachers' teaching philosophy, which still remains to use information-based teaching methods to complete the task of "Teaching", while students are still in a passive position of "Learning". The application of advanced information technology has failed to subvert the traditional teaching concept and to effectively carry out personalized

teaching activities with students as the main part. Furthermore, it not only suppresses students' interest and enthusiasm in learning, but also hinders the cultivation of teachers' and students' creative ability, and at the same time, affects the significant improvement of teaching quality.

### III. THE APPLICATION OF ONLINE AND OFFLINE BLENDED TEACHING MODE IN THE TEACHING IN "MANAGEMENT SCIENCE"

#### A. Curriculum Design

Basically, the "Management Science" is not only an important professional basic course for management majors but also a compulsory public basic course for management students. This course mainly introduces the basic concepts, principles and analysis methods of management. In addition to laying a foundation for students' follow-up courses, it is more important to make them understand the actual economic and social development, so as to strengthen the understanding of government policies. Moreover, the teaching goal of this course mainly focuses on the cultivation of students' abilities and professional qualities, that is, on the premise of insisting on the systematic theory of the course, the course focuses on the applicability, practicability and application to design specific teaching contents, and analyzes and selects numerous and jumbled management principles, as well as optimizes and integrates them. Based on this, the course embodies the idea that adult education takes "Necessity & Sufficiency" as the standard, and focuses on training students to master the basic thinking mode of management, so as to provide students with theoretical knowledge, analytical methods and solutions to analyze management phenomena and solve practical management problems. The course lay the foundation of theoretical knowledge and methodology for students to learn professional knowledge and skills, so as to improve the overall comprehensive quality and enhance professional development ability.

#### B. Construction of the Teaching Platform

The School of Continuing Education of Shanghai Polytechnic University adopted the Chaoxing MOOC network platform for the construction of the online and offline blended teaching platform. First of all, basic information, including course introductions, teaching calendars, course standards, teaching syllabus, etc., needs to be uploaded to the network. Secondly, design the outline of the "Management Science" to guide students to form a grasp of the overall knowledge structure of the course. In addition, build the learning units of the course. In general, the concentration time of adult students is short, and their comprehension ability is poor. Therefore, effective online and offline blended teaching cannot be a simple upload of offline teaching courseware. A large amount of text and the boring accumulation of information will only make adult students lose interest in learning. In view of this, online network platform resources should be fragmented, granular and systematic, and all important and difficult knowledge points in the "Management" course should be fragmented and granular in accordance with their inherent logic and systems. Moreover, teachers should also adopt a series of

expression methods, such as teaching micro-video, teaching animation, teaching audio, network links, teaching courseware (PPT), mixed media resources, text resources, etc., to reasonably split and condense teaching points. Each network teaching resource should be able to be expressed by pictures, that is, the carriers such as teaching courseware and teaching micro-video should strive to have more pictures and fewer words, so that students can talk by looking at pictures in the context of both pictures and texts. Besides, it should be short and concise, and each teaching micro-video or another carrier should try to ensure that students can finish learning in 10-15 minutes.

#### C. The Application of Online and Offline Blended Teaching Mode

First of all, students acquire learning resources through online autonomous learning before class. With the network platform as the learning carrier, students are not restricted by any time and place, and can listen to the mini-lectures anytime and anywhere. As the teacher fragmented the knowledge points of each teaching task and recorded them into short, concise and easy-to-understand videos, it is convenient for students to concentrate on learning. In addition, teachers also upload slides and various learning materials to the online learning platform to clarify the knowledge points and key issues of the teaching task, so that students can learn autonomously. Through the teacher's setting of breaking through testing questions, students can not only stimulate their interest in learning, but also can check the effect of autonomous learning and summarize the questions that need to feedback, thus collecting materials for the next targeted classroom teaching.

Second, in the off-line class, the teachers carry out teaching and answer questions. On the basis of adjusting the traditional classroom teaching contents and mode, the teacher will systematically teach the key knowledge in the teaching task, so as to consolidate the contents of students' online autonomous learning, and solve the problems encountered by students in the previous online learning process by answering questions, so as to improve students' understanding and deepening of the knowledge learned, and cultivate students' knowledge transfer and application ability. Furthermore, teachers not only can create various discussion and guiding topics and adopt typical task-driven teaching methods to check the effect of students' online learning, but also can collect, summarize and refine the common and individual problems existing in students' online learning process, thus determining the focus of classroom teaching. Under the guidance of teachers, students can deeply explore the root of the questions through participating in discussions and then conduct exchanges and debates to make their questions answered, thus enhancing students' ability to analyze and solve problems. During the process of classroom teaching implementation, teachers focus on explaining common questions and provide individual case guidance.

Third, teachers reflect on the teaching effect through after-class online outreach training. In view of the completed online autonomous learning and offline classroom teaching, teachers should reflect on the completion of teaching tasks and the existing problems, and supplement the corresponding teaching contents to optimize the teaching plan. In addition, teachers

should integrate theoretical knowledge with the practical operation, design and arrange comprehensive training cases to enhance students' practical operation skills and stimulate students' initiative and innovative awareness of in-depth learning and creative skills, thus improving the subsequent teaching effect. Besides, considering the special issues of students, teachers can adopt personalized guiding methods to suit local conditions and teach students in accordance with their aptitude. In this way, the teaching can not only satisfy the learning desire of different levels of learning subjects, but also enable teachers to accumulate rich teaching experience, thus ensuring the teaching effect and promoting the further improvement of teaching quality. Teachers can dig deeply into students' ideological trends and learning conditions, so as to lay a solid foundation for the next stage of teaching. (Fig.2)

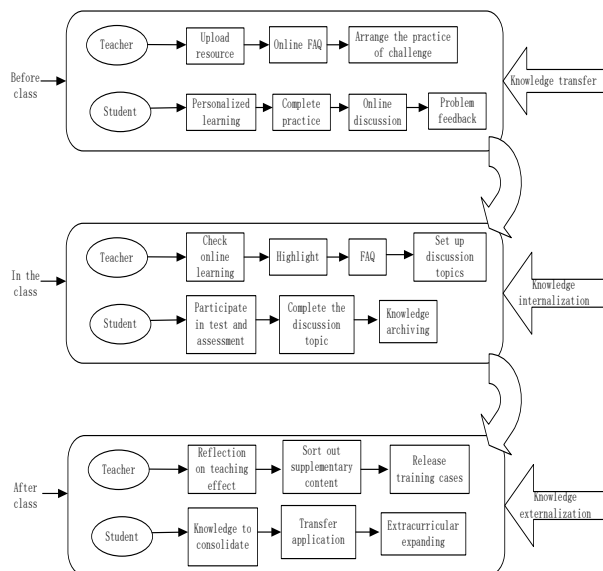


Fig. 2. The flow chart of Blended Teaching Mode

#### IV. CONCLUSION

To sum up, the implementation plan of the online and offline blended teaching mode of the "Management Science" designed in this paper has been used. Through investigation, it is proved that students' interest in learning this course has been greatly improved. Compared with the learning ability of ordinary classes that use traditional classroom teaching in "Management", the results show that the students of online and offline blended teaching mode are far higher than ordinary classes in terms of proficiency in management theory and practical application process of management. Obviously, on the basis of the advantages of traditional classroom teaching and network Massive Open Online Course teaching, this new teaching mode has been systematically designed and improved. Therefore, it not only realizes the teaching concept of taking students as the main part and teachers supervising the whole process, but also enhances students' initiative and consciousness in learning, and trains students' ability to explore and solve problems, thus improving students' practical operation skills. At the same time, it also meets the needs of students at different levels. Consequently, online and offline blended teaching will become the main direction of the coming reform of the teaching mode in universities.

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