

# A Study on Blended Teaching in College English Class Based on SPOC\*

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**Abstract**—SPOC is a new classroom teaching paradigm that is more suitable for colleges and universities in recent years. It is characterized by online independent learning and mixed learning directed by classroom teachers according to the characteristics of the era of big data. This paper mainly discusses how to use the online resources of SPOC as the basis adopting the combination of offline teaching and online self-study. Through a good learning environment and learning mode, teachers should actively guide students to try their own learning, inquiry learning and cooperative learning, and build a college English teaching mode suitable for applied schools to arouse students' interest in English learning, then explore the application of SPOC based blended teaching mode in college English class to provide help for the current college English teaching, improving teaching quality in an all-round way.

**Keywords:** SPOC, blended teaching, college English teaching

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, with the rapid development of information technology and the increasing exchanges among countries, resource sharing has become a major trend. Especially in the background of big data, there are more and more opportunities for transnational communication. English, as a common language, plays an important role. Therefore, we must learn English in the era of big data. There is no doubt that to learn English well, there is learning on the one hand and teaching on the more important hand. SPOC, as a new teaching form, provides a new idea for the smooth development of college English teaching. The blended English teaching based on SPOC has important significance in study and practice.

## II. OVERVIEW OF SPOC

With the rapid development of the network, the combination of basic education and information technology

\*Fund: The Ninth Batch China Foreign Language Education Fund Project "A study on the paperless evaluation of foreign language in universities under the digital environment — a case study on East university of Heilongjiang" (Project No.: ZGWYJYJJ2018A15); Industry-University Cooperative Education Project supported by National College Foreign Language Education Digital Alliance "A study on blended college English teaching based on DingDing"

has become a big trend. The involvement of information makes the basic education present the characteristics of popularization, optimization and individuation. SPOC is short for "Small Private Online Course". It is a new concept of Online learning proposed by Harvard University after MOOC. There are some reasons for the rise of SPOC. The letter "S" in SPOC stands for Small, whereas "M" in MOOC stands for Massive. The second English letter "P" stands for Private which is the opposite meaning of the word "Open". It indicates that SPOC strictly limits the scale of learning courses, and it also sets access conditions for the requirements of course participants. The ultimate purpose of SPOC is to improve the flexibility of classroom teaching, improve the characteristics of MOOC, and completely solve the problem of traditional teaching mode. Teachers in SPOC are the integrators of course resources, not necessarily protagonists of the video. Before class, teachers can integrate various physical and online resources according to students' objectives and bases. In class, the teachers are no longer speakers, they should play the role of organizers and directors, actively organize students' discussion in class, and instruct students to master knowledge individually according to the various levels of the students. Teachers should also solve students' practical problems to stimulate them actively to participate in classroom learning, which can also improve the students' ability of autonomous learning [1].

## III. CURRENT SITUATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS OF COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

### A. Current situations of college English teaching

1) A new teaching mode is urgently needed in college English class

At present, some English teachers in colleges and universities are still adopting the traditional educational concept in teaching, and lack the understanding of language learning characteristics and modern educational thoughts, which is a fatal threat in English teaching. In addition, the effect of English teaching in most colleges and universities is not ideal, nor is it recognized by most students. The reason for this phenomenon is that the teaching method is single, which is difficult to meet the actual needs of contemporary students. Students are always in a state of passive acceptance

of knowledge. Teachers adopt the classroom teaching mode of “one book, one pen and one person alone has the say”, which are against the communicative nature of language. With the rapid development of modern educational technology, the traditional educational concept, ways and methods are facing great challenges. The vigorous development of knowledge economy makes English teaching get rid of the traditional single mode, therefore the network and informatization have become inevitable trend, which combine classroom teaching and autonomous learning after class, multimedia and network teaching, with teachers as the center, so that it can meet the needs of personalized learning, to achieve the effect of get twice the result with half the effort. In a word, from the perspective of the current situation of college English courses, time efficiency must be used to improve students’ English application ability and English scores. Based on SPOC, it is extremely urgent to integrate college English into basic teaching methods [2].

### *2) Colleges and universities invest less in English teaching and have insufficient teachers*

Due to the increasing number of college students, there is a serious shortage of English teachers. In particular, some local colleges and universities are seriously short of foreign teachers, which make the threshold of college English teachers lower and lower. Most of the new teachers begin to teach as soon as they graduate, resulting in uneven teaching levels of college English teachers. In addition, the scale of higher education enrollment has been expanding significantly in recent years. In the long run, there will inevitably be a shortage of college English teachers. Teachers’ weekly teaching tasks are rather heavy, with dozens of class hours, so it is difficult to have time to improve their professional ability and theoretical level. However, as a qualified college English teacher, they should possess the deeper language skills as well as the profound knowledge. In addition, English teachers also need to master relevant professional knowledge and have higher quality. Therefore, it is difficult to meet the actual needs of students by adopting “fast food” training for teachers, and it is necessary to improve the quality while increasing the number of college English teachers, so as to rationally change the previous view that college English relies on self-study.

### *3) The purpose of college English teaching is limited to CET4 and CET6*

At present, CET4 and CET6 have promoted college English learning and improved college students’ English level to some extent. However, CET4 and CET6 also limit the college English teaching objectives and make English learning more utilitarian, which is not conducive to the development of college English teaching.

### *B. Requirements of college English teaching*

According to college students’ knowledge base and market requirement, the teaching objectives of college English course are to cultivate students’ comprehensive English application ability, especially the basic ability to use English in the workplace. At the same time, the objectives are to improve students’ comprehensive cultural literacy and

intercultural communication awareness, cultivate students’ learning interest and independent learning ability, enable students to master effective learning methods and learning strategies, so as to lay a necessary foundation for improving students’ employment competitiveness and future sustainable development ability. College English courses should not only help students lay a good language foundation, but also lay emphasis on cultivating students’ practical language skills, especially the ability to deal with the business related to the future career in English.

## **IV. THE VALUE OF SPOC TO COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING IN CHINA**

### *A. The enrichment of the teaching material*

The emergence of SPOC teaching mode has solved the problems in traditional English teaching, such as the lack of distinctive books, outdated textbooks and weak language and cultural environment. Since SPOC is very open, English teachers collect network resources according to the needs of courses under the background of big data, and integrate the resources to enrich the courses, so as to make the boring classes lively and interesting and improve the teaching efficiency of English classes.

### *B. The improvement of students’ learning experience and reinforcement of learning effect*

College English teaching mode based on SPOC is obviously different from the traditional English classroom teaching mode, because it limits specific access conditions, so that students are full of learning enthusiasm for the course itself, and their interests and hobbies are also different from ordinary students. In college English teaching based on SPOC, teachers can arrange offline tasks according to students’ characteristics, thus solving the problem of shortening students’ independent learning time due to teachers’ long face-to-face teaching time in traditional teaching. The SPOC teaching mode can give students a complete and profound learning experience, and promote students to be more active in English learning, and enjoy happiness in learning. Based on SPOC English teaching model, students can read and prepare materials carefully offline, which overcomes the shortcomings of students’ insufficient learning motivation to some extent. With the emergence of SPOC, online learning goes far beyond the traditional classroom teaching mode, improving students’ independent learning experience and classroom efficiency, and making learning effect more effective [3].

### *C. Redefinition of the teacher’s role and the innovation of teaching mode*

Generally, in the college English teaching mode, teachers are more dependent on the content inherent in the textbook. The most common teaching mode is to expand on the content of the textbook. In class, students are listeners but not participants. In the teaching mode of SPOC, teachers can really become the controllers of the class, and can integrate resources with online advantages instead of sticking to

textbooks. In addition, resources are collected according to the characteristics of students in the class, and offline time can be made full use to let students learn materials independently. In classroom, the traditional teaching method is transformed into a personalized tutoring method, and difficult problems can be solved together with students. The new teaching mode based on SPOC can help students deeply learn English knowledge, make use of limited classroom learning time, master more learning methods, and make a comprehensive use of online and offline methods, so as to stimulate students' interest in learning and significantly improve the classroom efficiency.

#### V. STUDY CONTENT AND COURSE DESIGN OF BLENDED TEACHING IN COLLEGE ENGLISH BASED ON SPOC

##### A. *Study content of blended teaching in college English based on SPOC*

The core of blended teaching in college English based on SPOC mainly includes three parts: SPOC online learning, online plus offline tutoring, and real-time course evaluation. Among them, SPOC online learning includes four parts: courseware resources, micro lecture videos, knowledge extension, and practice tests. The teachers design and record the boring traditional teaching contents into short and concise micro lecture videos with clear, focused and concise contents, so as to not only explain language knowledge and language skills, but also introduce English culture and cultivate literary accomplishment.

Students can independently complete the task of SPOC learning. Meanwhile, an important part of the blended English teaching mode is to provide students with timely and effective tutoring in various forms, mainly including online discussion groups and offline tutorials. The online discussion group is a class group composed of teachers, teaching assistants and students established by teachers through the mobile APP platform to help students answer any questions that they encounter during the process of online learning at any time. Offline tutorial courses are mainly for regular tutoring and answering questions for the class. Teachers can provide face-to-face tutoring for students' learning of SPOC and deal with difficulties and questions encountered in classroom projects. The supervision and evaluation of SPOC online learning mainly start from the subjective and objective aspects. The learning platform software can be fully utilized to record and count students' accurate learning time and academic performance. Teachers and teaching assistants can evaluate the exercises submitted by students, so as to truly reflect students' learning outcome. SPOC online learning is the fundamental premise for the blended college English teaching mode, which lays a good foundation for micro-classroom offline display and offline cooperative learning [4].

In a word, the design of classroom activities and the effect of students' autonomous learning are the key to the blended college English teaching mode based on SPOC. In the whole process of English teaching, teachers play a leading and assisting role, and students input and output the

language independently or cooperatively under the guidance of teachers.

##### B. *Course design of blended teaching in college English based on SPOC*

###### 1) *Theoretical basis*

Constructivism holds that knowledge is acquired by means of meaning construction by learners in a certain context, i.e. social and cultural background, using necessary learning materials and with the help of others including teachers and learning partners, rather than by teachers. In the whole teaching process, students are the center, teachers play a role of the instructor, organizer, and helper. Teachers make full use of a few elements such as collaboration, context, and conversation. Teachers mobilize students' enthusiasm, initiative and creativity, so that the students can achieve the purpose of the construction of current knowledge.

In the mode of blended teaching in college English based on SPOC, the core is to play the role of students' initiative, so as to build knowledge and skills, and to enhance students' active learning awareness and arrange the learning process independently. In meaningful learning situations, problem solving requires mutual collaboration. Only effective communication can fundamentally promote learners to construct the knowledge. Blended teaching in college English based on SPOC requires learners to conduct online and offline interaction. Through the use of SPOC course resources, learners can solve difficult problems in learning with individual or group cooperation, which help them to transform from passive knowledge indoctrinators to learning activity subjects [5].

###### 2) *Objectives and needs*

At present, college English teaching objectives are set as: to strengthen students' English application ability, especially to cultivate their listening and speaking ability, and to communicate in English in future related businesses, including oral communication and written communication. At the same time, it is necessary to enhance students' autonomous learning ability, master scientific learning methods, comprehensively improve their cultural literacy and improve their professional ability, so as to lay a foundation for their future development. English teachers should make a comprehensive understanding of the English needs of new students when they enter the school. Through the way of conversation, the English teachers can understand the goals set by college students for learning English. The goals can be summarized as follows: to improve the oral English ability, to use English for general communication; to pass college English test band 4; to have more time for autonomous learning; to be tutored and be helped answer questions by teachers or students in time.

###### 3) *Design ideas*

First, it is the project-driven principle. Eight items can be designed for college English courses: company profile, business banquet, schedule, product introduction, product sales, cargo transportation, customer satisfaction survey, and job interview. It is needed to make sure that online courses

upload videos of works, and then to create meaningful learning situations. After class, groups complete the task together. After that, a group will be arranged to display their works in the classroom, and teachers and students will comment on them together.

Second, it is the principle of teamwork. Teachers should cooperate with each other, whether it is resource construction, platform design, micro-video production, or project cases and assessment evaluation, they need to create and discuss together. When students complete each assignment, the team should be the unit. The whole process should be jointly undertaken and completed by the team members, from writing scripts, rehearsing lines, assigning roles to shooting videos and post-production.

Third, it is the input-output combination principle. Online courses can provide students with blended teaching resources, encourage students to learn by themselves, and provide students with comprehensive and systematic language input, so that students can realize autonomous learning regardless of time and space. The script in each report aims at developing students' writing ability, while the classroom project focuses on developing students' oral expression ability. Each unit takes the project as the carrier, from the input of the language to the output, so that students can successfully complete the construction of knowledge and skills in meaningful learning situations [6].

#### 4) *Teaching implementation*

When carrying out a specific classroom situation teaching, teachers should do a good job in the following aspects:

First, preparation: teachers can collect relevant sentence patterns, vocabulary and scene videos in common use according to online resources, and upload the English version of the school map to the cloud class. Based on the teaching materials collected before class, a pre-class self-study task list is designed and distributed to each student.

Second, online learning before class: students can make reasonable use of their spare time according to the task list before class and finish the task before class independently.

Third, classroom activities: in class, teachers use vocabulary competition, situation reflection, video dubbing, role playing, brainstorming and other activities to encourage students to actively participate in language practice.

Fourth, online activities after class: teachers set relevant tasks for classroom teaching according to students' responses in class, so as to consolidate the knowledge points learned by students.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In a word, the application of SPOC in college English teaching has promoted the university student to participate in the online and offline classroom course in all the way. It breaks the traditional teaching mode, exploits students learning time and space. At the same time, it makes the students' learning time became free, makes the teaching more

flexible and can greatly inspire the students' learning interest and motivation, so as to improve the teaching effect.

The use of network teaching resources endows college English teaching content with keeping pace with the times and rich culture. It has improved the compatibility of open online teaching resources, updated and enriched college English teaching contents in a timely manner, and greatly improved the efficiency of college English teaching.

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