An Action Research of Blended College English Teaching Mode Based on the Double Platforms

Ma Jing

Beijing Union University, Beijing, China, 100101

ldtmajing@buu.edu.cn

Abstract

With the rapid development of network and mobile technology in recent years, there has been boundless open education resources. And Online-offline blended teaching came into being under this background. This article combines action research and teaching practice to analyze the characteristics and practice of problematic issues and explore the paradigm and feasibility of pedagogical approaches in blended college English teaching. It is hoped that this research can provide some reference and operability.

Key words: Paradigm of online-offline teaching; Blended teaching; Three-dimension; Action research；MOOC；Unipus

1. Introduction

Since the first year of MOOC(Massive Open Online Courses) in 2012, American colleges and universities have launched three MOOC platforms: Coursera, EdX and Udacity, which become very popular. Immediately, the MOOC wave spread from the United States to the whole world. Some universities and educational platforms in China have also launched their own MOOC platforms. The famous ones are Xuetang of Tsinghua University, Icourse, and MOOC of China Universities launched by Netease Cloud Classroom. With the development of technology and curriculum construction, online and offline blended learning provides a new perspective and approach for college English teaching and learning. The characteristics of action research, such as participation, action, exploration and reflection, provide effective assistance for this new model.

2. Research Background and Design

2.1 Research background

In the New Media Consortium *Horizon Report* (2017 Higher Education Edition), it is pointed out that blended learning design is the most concerned trend in recent years. In this trend, online and offline blended teaching mode is particularly eye-catching. Blended teaching emphasizes the effective combination of "face-to-face" and "online" advantages, seeks the best allocation method of teaching content in face-to-face and online teaching, and increases the flexibility and convenience of students' learning. The blended teaching also emphasizes the blending with "network technology" in the course design and teaching. Thus, different teaching modes and learning methods can be deeply integrated. In the teaching process, students' autonomy and creativity should be always given attention, that is to say, the teachers should not only play the leading role of instructors in guiding, inspiring and monitoring the teaching process, but also fully bring out the students' initiative, enthusiasm and creativity as the main body of the learning process (Han Xibin et al, 2015). Based on the above characteristics of blended teaching, this research mainly takes the action research method as the

guidance, through two rounds of teaching practice, discusses the construction of four-dimensional learning model for online and offline blended teaching. Action research is a method of educational research, which integrates educational theory and practice. Its core concept emphasizes the participation of all relevant personnel in the research process. Teachers and students are not only the most important roles, but also the important objects of the research process (Liao Genfu et al, 2019, p.106). This kind of "mixed" teaching and its characteristics work well with each other. Meanwhile, the action research often starts with raising questions in action, uses creative thinking to solve problems systematically in action, evaluates, reflects and puts forward new problems in action so as to promote continuous progress.

2.2 Research design

2.2.1 Research subjects

This research takes sophomores of non-English Majors in our university as the research subjects, college English teaching as the research goal and uses the BUU-MOOC and Unipus platforms to implement online and offline blended teaching to realize the Flipped Classroom.

2.2.2 Research methods and objectives

This study adopts planning, action, observation and reflection from the model of action research, improves and optimizes the teaching structure of this course through the four links, so as to improve students' self-efficacy, self-regulated learning ability and learning cooperation ability in College English learning.

2.2.3 Research plan and implementation steps

Sophomore students are required to earn both the appropriate credits for the semester's study and to take the TEM-4 at the same time. This research uses two rounds of pedagogical action research in the early and middle stage. The early stage is to construct the basic paradigm of online and offline teaching and learning, and the middle stage is to identify problems and observe the degree of self-adaptation of students with different motivations in the blended teaching model and to develop a homogeneous and multidimensional learning ecology and evaluation approach.

3. Early Stage Action Research

3.1 Raising questions

In College English curriculum requirements, it is clearly pointed out: train students to process information of medium language difficulty and understand the main idea and important details through teaching; to basically meet the needs of information exchange closely related to their daily life and study; and to be able to use effective learning strategies. In order to meet this requirement, the school has built an online platform to enrich the online resources. However, the students' use is not as sufficient as it should be, which is a problem that needs to be analyzed and solved.

3.2 Design implementation

This phase is designed to be carried out according to the time axis: before class, in class and after class. First of all, the course materials including language key points, difficult points, related text and audio materials are released on Unipus a week in advance for preview, and the corresponding courses are launched on BUU-MOOC. On this basis, the teachers shall provide the corresponding preview text to guide and observe students' preview. The text is designed to cover declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge and cognitive strategies in accordance with the framework of learning categories and can be uploaded through Unipus or completed offline in paper form.

The second phase is mainly face-to-face teaching, interspersed with a variety of online tasks. In view of the preview situation of students, the emphasis of classroom content shall be adjusted flexibly. Teaching and online activities shall be carried out at the same time, such as registering attendance, voting, pop quiz and tests on

various types of vocabulary, translation of the key sentence patterns in the text, the comprehension of the content, etc. It is not only the reinforcement of the first phase, but also the real-time test of the classroom teaching effect. At the same time, it can help students internalize and output what they have learned.

The third phase mainly includes post-tests, reflection and supplement. The online and offline design focuses on the pertinence and difference. Pertinence refers to the mastery of key and difficult points in learning and the achievement of learning objectives. Difference refers to the degree to which students at different levels master new knowledge through the first two phases of learning. For example, oral and writing post-tests are carried out on Ispeak and Iwrite of Unipus, which can not only greatly relieve teachers from repetitive labor, but also allow some of the students to speak and write boldly without the psychological burden, and get immediate feedback, evaluation and correction.

3.3 Implementation observation

In this round of action research, the purpose and task are relatively clear to teachers and students. From the data of the two platforms, 90% of students can accept online and offline blended learning. The advantages of different online platforms are also different. Among them, WeChat is more instant, while Unipus is better at the diversity and convenience of material output. BUU-MOOC is good at autonomy and personalization. The latter two platforms can achieve real-time acquisition and reuse of learning materials, at the same time the length recording of students' learning time, so as to help teachers understand students' learning input and output, and give timely feedback and personalized process evaluation. There are also some problems in the implementation process of this round of action research, which are mainly reflected in three aspects. First, the sustainability and self-planning of online learning are inadequate. Second, the adhesion of online learning is insufficient. Third, the online and offline mixing is relatively stiff.

3.4 Action reflection

With data collection, student interviews and homework analysis, it is found that the first section of BUU-MOOC platform is more frequently used than the following sections by most students. The student interviews revealed that the reason for this phenomenon is that there were more detailed instruction on the online components at the time of initial use, but insufficient instruction at a later stage. At this time the students had not yet developed a self-paradigm for online and offline learning. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct clear guidance according to the characteristics of each task in the second round of action research to help the students build the habit of online learning. In order to solve the problem of insufficient adhesion of online learning, it is significant to fully explore the diversified and multi-level use of the two platforms, and to adopt differentiated setting and evaluation in the course learning setting, comprehensive evaluation, homework and test. At the same time, the online isolated learning shall be reported horizontally and vertically through the tutorial learning. Formative evaluation shall be given to enhance the combination of online learning content and learning process and improve the degree of adhesion. In this round of practice, it is noticeable that students can not only master knowledge, exercise skills, but also have a good emotional experience for the well blended parts, such as watching video online for oral imitation practice, making their own dubbing works, and showing their works in offline class with online voting, which greatly enhance the students' sense of self-efficacy in learning. Therefore, in the second round of action research, it is necessary to modify the part of online and offline integration to maximize the advantages of blended teaching.

4. Middle Stage Action Research

4.1 Revision and implementation of research plan

Based on the reflection of the early stage of action research, each link of online and offline mixing was re-examined, and corresponding amendments were made to the original plan. First of all, according to the teaching

content, the teachers redesigned the entry point of online and offline integration from the different skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. Secondly, from the perspective of deep learning and collaborative learning, the teachers increased the proportion of online and offline students' output content to enhance their participation. At the same time, we enriched the evaluation methods and increased the self and peer evaluation. Take oral English as an example, the traditional offline oral English course is time-consuming, slow in effectiveness and weak in pertinence. In the early stage of action research, although online platform and online technology were used, the form was unitary, the relevance with other skills and content was low. The continuous and effective deep learning had not formed, and the cultivation of collaborative ability was also lacking. In the new round of action research, we adjusted and made a new action plan. Students were first guided to find speaking materials in the relevant videos on the BUU-MOOC platform according to their own ability. Afterwards, they were instructed to imitate, learn and output certain forms of shared tests on the selected materials, such as vocabulary dictation, writing topic discussion, reading analysis, and recitation appreciation based on the audio and video. The final output content can be used for offline course sharing and review, or for testing on the Unipus. In this process, the adherence of the platform is greatly enhanced. The application of audio and video materials is explored in different dimensions. The utilization rate is increased accordingly, and students can form groups to improve their collaborative learning skills. Ultimately, it will help students to build their adaptive learning skills in a digital context.

4.2 New observation of research implementation

In the new round of action, this research collected data again and conducted student interviews for comparison so as to observe the improvement of online and offline blended teaching and the changes of students in the four knowledge dimensions: fact, procedure, concept and metacognition. More than 90% of the students had enhanced their adaptive learning ability compared with the first round of action research. For example, reading materials with the same content can be designed as reading exercises with different degrees of difficulty. Teachers can not only use one yardstick to judge students' learning effect. Students can get immediate feedback from different phases. Therefore, the students of different levels can improve in the cognitive dimension, memory, understanding and application. But at the same time, online task design also faced many challenges. For example, the prevalence of voice recognition and text recognition software made the students with weak self-control ability tend rely on software to complete online tasks or homework, which damaged their ability to exercise and develop in the long run. Therefore, offline practice is also indispensable. On the one hand, electronic input is very different from paper writing. For example, for the input of vocabulary there may be many ways of intelligent input online to replace the learner's own output so that students have difficulty finding their own memory or spelling problems in vocabulary, which is obvious once transferred to the offline paper test. On the other hand, in terms of self-efficacy, offline activities stimulate the students more deeply and persistently. Few students will look back at their online activities, but most of the offline materials will be retained and used repeatedly. But in the three levels of analysis, evaluation and creation, the vast majority of students are not significantly different from the first stage. It is assumed that the latter three cognitive dimensions still need time to develop. Generally, the model of blended online and offline teaching has been accepted by most students and has a positive influence on them. However, it means higher demands for the teachers, in terms of classroom management, digital technology and instructional design.

4.3 Rethinking of action research

Most of the online and offline blended courses have basically completed a closed loop of learning in the three stages before, during and after class.In this study the author believes that the achievement of specific learning tasks does not mean the end of learning, but the starting point, learning how to learn and getting good at it, from learning how to explore and innovate to emotional sublimation. Therefore, how to inspire students to

think about their own learning behavior and learning set and to build their lifelong learning habits has become a new challenge. At this stage, the digital literacy of teachers should be improved. The digital strategy used in teaching plays an important role in guiding students' deep learning. The digital equity gap of students themselves and the achievement gap formed in online and offline blended teaching make the polarization problem more prominent (Jin Hui, 2017).

5. Conclusion

Through two rounds of action research, based on BUU-MOOC and Unipus as the platforms, combined with teaching practice, this research discusses the diversity of online and offline blended teaching for enriching education ecology, strengthens the construction of adaptive learning paradigm and explores the methods of deep learning. A four-dimensional learning model based on lifelong learning has been formed, which is to cultivate learners' professional knowledge and skills to meet the basic requirements of English in the dimension of basic ability. In terms of breadth, it is important to take language learning as a bridge to realize the integration of arts and science and expand students' horizons. In terms of depth, the process of language learning should be integrated to make it structured and practical. In the dimension of creativity, students should be guided to develop relevant thinking, critical thinking and dialectical thinking. Online and offline blended teaching has become the trend of college English teaching. On the one hand, with the development of technology and the maturity of technologies such as emotional computing and virtual reality, the interactivity and subjectivity of online learning have become more significant. On the other hand, the emotion, atmosphere and authenticity transmitted among students and teachers in offline teaching seem more precious. Therefore, it is important to keep exploring and improving to cultivate talents suitable for the future survival and development of the country.

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Biography

Ma Jing, Bachelor, Teaching Assistant of Foreign Language Department of Beijing Union University, Research interests: English Teaching Method.