

# ACTIVITIES DESIGN STRATEGIES OF BLENDED ENGLISH GRAMMAR TEACHING IN HIGHER VOCATIONAL COLLEGES

Wang Huan<sup>1</sup> and Noraini Zainal Abidin<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Faculty of Education and Liberal Studies, City University Malaysia, 46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.

**ABSTRACT** – The outbreak of COVID-19 has made online teaching an important part of daily teaching. In the post-epidemic period, blended teaching will inevitably become a new teaching form in teaching activities, bringing a new classroom revolution and learning revolution to English grammar teaching in higher vocational colleges. Therefore, based on the characteristics analysis of EFL learners' learning behavior, colleges and universities should transform the teaching methods with the combination of information technology and depth fusion of education teaching. It is important to make full use of the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), Small Private Online Course (SPOC) and flip classroom teaching methods by the cohesion of course activities to improve the teaching paradigm online. Besides, with the help of intelligent platform to make out the learning behavior analysis data is also available which is benefits to content visualization, network class differentiation, entity classroom interaction and intelligent teaching management, realizing the "internet + intelligent" education, to build more high-quality courses. This paper is to adopt two classes students by different teaching methods, which are blended teaching method and traditional teaching method to explore the students' learning behavior influential factors and activity design for blended teaching mode framework. Based on SPOC blended teaching course into the actual grammar teaching, this study discusses the English grammar blended teaching strategy for EFL learners. The aim is to improve the teaching efficiency of teachers and students' learning ability, and provide theoretical guidance for the design of the blended teaching mode of English grammar in higher vocational colleges.

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## INTRODUCTION

After the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China 2020 proposed a policy that learning continues during class suspension to ensure the teaching progress and learning effect, which promoted the institutions in colleges and universities to conduct the teaching online during the epidemic prevention and control period. Wu Yan in 2020 proposed that online teaching should be transformed from a "wartime measure" into a "peacetime mechanism", from a "temporary educational reform" into a "quality action", and from a "novelty" to a "new normal".

This guideline and initiative provided an important opportunity for teaching reform and greatly promoted the transformation of education and teaching. However, in normal teaching activities, only relying on online teaching can not meet the teaching needs. With the impact of online teaching, the effective use of a blended teaching environment in education and teaching to optimise all aspects of teaching design has become a hot research topic and a difficult point after the epidemic (Fang Wenjia, 2021).

Traditional teaching methods have many limitations (Yu Xinjie, 2019), such as the inability to achieve large-scale unified teaching, the teaching time cycle being long, the learning time not being flexible, and so on. With the rapid development of Internet technology and multimedia technology, teaching technology and teaching means are constantly enriched, and the classroom teaching mode is constantly innovating.

Blended teaching can give full play to the autonomy and creativity of teachers and students and also can reflect the initiative, enthusiasm and creativity of students as the subject of the learning process

(Ye Rongrong,2012). However, most teachers can not make full use of this advantage. Many teachers even think that they can only complete superficial teaching interactions such as check-in and watching videos through online teaching platforms (Wu Ying & Que Zijiang, 2022).

As for the English grammar course, how to make it conform to the new requirements and improve the effect of grammar teaching is necessary to discuss. Blended teaching is not only the new teaching method under modern technology but also the demand for teaching reform. However, for blended teaching, teachers are not fully prepared. The distribution of credit hours in online and offline teaching and the connection between the two forms of teaching are important dilemmas faced by English teachers.

Therefore, this paper takes grammar teaching during the epidemic period as an example and analyses the classroom activities as the basis to explore the blended teaching strategies of English grammar in vocational colleges in the post-epidemic period.

This paper provides theoretical guidance for the design of a blended teaching mode of English grammar in higher vocational colleges through in-depth literature research. At the same time, it analyses the concept, connotation, theoretical basis and practical value of blended learning and blended teaching mode, and through specific chapters of the vocational English grammar teaching system, including the analysis of learning situation, textbook requirements and learning status, based on the theory of blended learning, it analyses the application cases of blended teaching in colleges and universities at home and abroad. Combined with the characteristics of specific chapters, the existing blended teaching model is improved, and the specific chapter teaching design case based on the blended teaching model is designed.

According to the blended instructional design paradigm proposed in this paper, which includes pre-class, during-class, and after-class teaching cases and practices, teaching cases and practices are designed. In addition, research methods such as interviews and questionnaire surveys are used to evaluate and analyse the teaching effect so as to test whether the blended teaching model can achieve teaching objectives and improve teaching efficiency. Finally, summarise the experience, analyse the deficiency, and put forward the optimisation strategy in the English curriculum of higher vocational colleges.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **An Overview of Literature Review**

Blended teaching originated in the field of corporate training in the early 20th century and then moved into the fields of education and information technology. In essence, blended teaching is the use of new tools of information technology to improve teaching efficiency, and the rapid development of a large number of online courses in the form of open free. The main forms of blended teaching mode include large-scale open MOOC courses, small-scale, limited SPOC courses and other online teaching courses.

A comprehensive study of domestic literature reveals that domestic scholars and front-line researchers have different views on the definition of blended teaching. For example, in the opinion of Deng Fanqiong (2019), blended teaching is the combination of network teaching and traditional classroom teaching. Chen Xiaoxi(2019) believes that "blended teaching should be based on students' blended learning needs. Under the concept of Internet +, combined with the requirements of new curriculum standards and education informatisation, it should be a new teaching mode that sublates the traditional education mode".

Su Zhenzhen(2019) and others pointed out that blended teaching is the integration of classroom teaching and online teaching. Some scholars, represented by Liu Qiaowen(2019), believe that blended teaching emphasises the use of appropriate teaching media according to the course content and other factors.

And some scholars, represented by Qu Fuhuan(2019), believe that blended teaching is a combination of "teacher-centred and learning-centred". He points out that "blended teaching can

improve students' learning initiative, help teachers improve their own teaching quality and ability, and promote the exploration and transformation from teacher-centered to learning-centered". As MOOC have become more popular abroad, Chinese education scholars have also invested in their research.

In recent years, new teaching modes such as MOOC and flipped classrooms, which are popular, have been increasingly applied in practical teaching. Teaching combined with digital technology means has become the main direction and trend of today's education reform. On the basis of learning from the successful reform practices of other countries, our country is also studying how to adapt to the national conditions and conform to the curriculum characteristics of blended teaching in the domestic educational environment.

In China, Zhejiang University began to apply SPOC in September 2014, and then it was successively carried out in relevant teaching practices at Tianjin University and Tsinghua University. Among them, Tsinghua University uses the SPOC teaching and provided relevant experiment data from three years, which came to the conclusion that the SPOC teaching showed some slight advantages compared with the traditional teaching methods (An Yu, 2018).

### **Influential Factors of Blended Teaching**

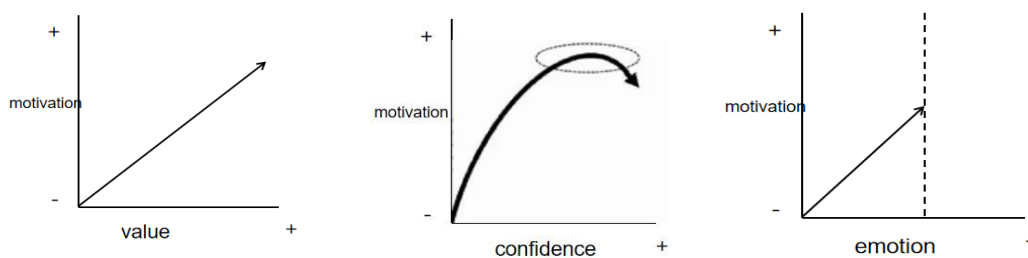
Blended teaching is a new integration and redesign of online teaching and offline teaching. It is a combination of mobile technology, online teaching and face-to-face teaching. The purpose of teaching is to enable students to acquire personalised knowledge and generate creative knowledge structure. Its theoretical basis is constructivism and connectionism. The core of the integration of online and offline teaching is the activity design of teachers based on this course. This activity design is based on the teaching reality, local conditions and individualised teaching.

Therefore, teachers using blended teaching should fully recognise the learning motivation of students, analyse their learning behaviour, and conduct the activity design and teaching supervision of blended teaching according to the characteristics of students (Hu et al., 2021).

In teaching, students' learning behaviour is affected by three factors, namely, curriculum value, learner confidence and learner learning emotion. In classroom teaching, students' learning motivation should be mainly stimulated to enhance curriculum value. The higher the curriculum value is, the more motivated students will be. In addition, attention should be paid to students' learning confidence. The more confident they are in completing the course tasks, the stronger their motivation will be.

However, as shown in the figure below, the higher the confidence is, the higher the confidence will be. Therefore, curriculum design should pay attention to meeting the requirements of the "zone of proximal development" theory, providing students with slightly difficult content, and arousing students' enthusiasm. Finally, learning emotion also affects students' learning motivation. The highest point of emotion requires not only the curriculum design of teachers but also the interaction between teachers and students.

Therefore, the highest point of emotion affecting learning motivation should be determined according to the actual curriculum practice. The specific degree of influence is shown in the figure below (Feng Xiaoying, 2020)



**Figure 1.** Influential Factors of Blended Teaching

## **METHODOLOGY**

Based on the investigation of the status quo of English grammar learning, this study conducted questionnaire distribution and data analysis for students of Grade 2021 in a higher vocational college in Henan Province by means of questionnaire, to understand the learning status and learning attitude of experimental class and reference class towards blended teaching. Then, by analysing the curriculum design of blended teaching, the teaching content of the English tense is selected. After that, the teaching practice and questionnaire survey are conducted again to analyse the activity strategies of blended teaching in pre-class, during class and after class in order to guide English grammar teaching.

The samples of the learning status questionnaire are 44 students from Class A in a higher vocational college in Henan Province. In this study, Class A is taken as the experimental class taught by the author, and Class B is taken as the control class, with a total of 45 students. The questionnaire was issued when English grammar was not conducted by blended teaching.

Before the experiment, in order to understand the current situation of students' learning, the author collected and sorted out data and conducted questionnaires on students' learning degree of grammar, understanding degree of online courses and attitude towards online learning.

According to the questionnaire analysis, due to the impact of the epidemic, 82% of students know very much about online courses, 16% only know but are not familiar with them, and 2% of students say they do not know at all. In terms of attitudes towards online learning in grammar courses, 23% of students are very interested, 67% are generally interested, and 10% are not interested. The data show that the vast majority of students are very interested in and look forward to online learning but suffer from the lack of standardised online learning methods.

The objects of teaching are students, and only by fully understanding the actual situation of students can we find the appropriate teaching mode according to their learning needs. The blended teaching mode is to change the previous mode of completely using classroom teaching into a mode appropriately combining online learning. The learning theory of this study is mainly based on constructivism learning theory, collaborative learning theory, deep learning theory, etc.

On this basis, the author further puts forward the blended teaching mode of design. The blended teaching based on the introduction of learning-oriented courses includes four parts: resource preparation, pre-class learning, in-class learning and after-class practice. Combined with relevant materials and practical experience, the blended teaching design model is designed to introduce learning-oriented APP courses and other resources into grammar teaching.

### **Teaching Design**

English grammar courses are designed according to the latest English Curriculum Standards for Higher Vocational Education (2021). In the design of blended teaching mode, based on the introduction of resources such as SPOC courses, the pre-class learning is designed and selected in full combination with the training objectives of curriculum standards, and the self-study task list is designed to highlight the subjectivity of students in the learning process, so as to complete the cultivation of students' independent learning ability and the formation of correct learning habits.

During the epidemic, due to the particularity of the teaching environment, online teaching mainly has the following characteristics: online teaching courses based on MOOC, course recording and other methods have complete content, detailed knowledge points, wide coverage and attention to teachers' "teaching"; Live classes relying on live streaming platforms such as Dingding, Xuetong and Tencent Classroom have prominent points of emphasis, clear outline and context, and pay attention to timely feedback in class.

Taking the English perfect tense of the English grammar course of Grade 2021 during the epidemic as an example, a complete course of blended teaching (90 minutes account for during-class) was mainly composed of 31% teacher explanation, 27% classroom questioning, 18% teacher-student interaction, 11% independent learning, and 8% multimedia viewing.

**Table 1.** A complete course of blended teaching

Teaching Producers	Teaching Contents	Teaching Activities	Time/Minutes	Percentage	Teaching Method
Pre-class	Preview task list	Online tasks			
During-class:	Review of pre-class content	Teacher's explanation	15	16%	Offline
	Warm-up	Watch videos and ask questions in class	25	27%	Online +Offline
	Background information of tense and examples listed	Teacher explains the background information	5	5%	Online +Offline
	Teach the example sentences and summarize the key points	Teacher's explanation	5	5%	Online +Offline
	Tense conversion	Exercise	8	8%	Online +Offline
	Extensive reading and translation	Independent learning	10	11%	Offline
	The tense differences between Chinese and English	Discussion between teachers and students	17	18%	Offline
	Review and homework	Teacher's explanation	5	5%	Online +Offline
After-class:	Feedback and test from students' feelings and scores	Feedback questionnaire			

## RESULTS

According to the time statistics in the grammar course, it can be seen that a complete live course requires students to do a lot of pre-class preparation. Among them, teachers' explanations and teacher-student interaction account for a relatively high proportion in live classrooms. There are two reasons for this. First, live teaching is basically equivalent to a physical classroom, focusing on teachers' "teaching" rather than students' "learning."; Secondly, the high proportion of interaction time is mainly due to the network delay of many interaction links, which consumes a lot of class time.

### Pre-class Design

By analysing the difficulty of the course and the learning behaviour of students, the teaching design of the learning content is carried out, the course task list is released through the learning platform, and the relevant course information of this course is sent, including the course objectives, teaching steps, learning difficulties, assessment methods, etc., and the topics to be discussed in class are put forward. In addition, students are provided with bibliographies related to the library to borrow or send links to extended materials, inquire about background knowledge, and prepare materials for preset topics based on the background information input by independent learning.

According to the task list before class, the students can have a good understanding of what they will be taught and learn in this class. As for the reflection part, it will be divided into timely feedback and after-class feedback. Timely feedback is completed in class, with the students' tasks finished online. After-class feedback is completed through offline activities. In addition, if there are any "technical difficulties" in the online communication of the group, such as not being proficient in the use of the course platform, the group will summarise and give timely feedback so that the students can eliminate various external difficulties and devote themselves to the study of the course content.

### During-class Interaction

After getting familiar with the online learning environment and the teacher's course design, I will focus on the teacher-student interaction in the physical class and always pay attention to the learning

effect of students. It will guide students to construct the knowledge of this course through the activities of questionnaire, voting, quick answer, topic discussion, brainstorming, group debate, case analysis, on-site mind mapping and so on.

### **After-class Feedback**

The reflection and summary stage is mainly composed of offline activities. The learning reflection is carried out according to the course task list and the interaction in class. The input of self-learning before class and part of the input and output of class are analysed and summarised.

Teaching evaluation and teaching supervision are mainly carried out by means of course group chat. The task topics of this class continue to be discussed, and the output mind map and learning report are evaluated by students and teachers and students respectively. The timely feedback through data statistics and analysis of learning makes the course learning more systematic and complete.

## **DISCUSSION**

English teaching in higher vocational colleges is a comprehensive course of English skill accomplishment and humanistic spirit accomplishment. Curriculum value is very important for students' learning motivation. It is necessary to figure out the suitable content so that it can help to promote students' learning confidence and motivation. Only by combining the excavation of curriculum value and the mobilisation of students' learning confidence and learning emotion can good teaching effects be achieved. Relying solely on physical classroom teaching can not only meet the learning needs of advanced students but also can not provide learning confidence for lower-level students, affecting the learning effect. In this case, blended teaching integrates independent creative learning and lecturing guidance, which not only enables students with good degrees to complete advanced learning tasks through online learning but also enables middle and low-level students to achieve established learning goals.

Blended teaching is not only a simple combination of online and offline, but "a new learning paradigm that fully integrates online learning, mobile learning and offline learning, bringing about the reform of teaching mode and teaching design", which is a "fundamental reform and redesign of teaching mode" (Xiaoying Feng, 2021). The connotation of students' learning changes from common and standardised knowledge acquisition to personalised and creative knowledge construction. The role of teachers is no longer "only" but "multi-dimensional", changing from "lecturer" to "transmitter" of knowledge. Curriculum "instructional design" is transformed into "learning design" for students. It is necessary not only to design 45-minute classroom teaching steps but also to design offline teaching activities. Teachers need to pay attention to the design of the whole teaching process, from curriculum design and development to learning support services, to replace lecture-based teaching with inquiry teaching, to design pre-class, during-class and after-class activities as the core, to set up learning scaffolding to guide students' learning path, to achieve the design realm that triggers students' "soul". Therefore, the blended classroom design based on activity connection is the focus of blended English teaching in higher vocational colleges.

## **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

During the epidemic period, online teaching was guided by the government, with universities as the main body and extensive participation of the society. Combined with the actual situation of each school, we can jointly ensure the normal operation of teaching. This teaching management is also an unprecedented new attempt involving a large scope, a wide range of curriculum coverage, teaching evaluation data, education governance and education structure to achieve substantial restructuring. Taking this opportunity, colleges and universities make full use of intelligent teaching technology tools and big data support to supervise the content and process, behaviour and effect analysis of teaching and learning, and guide the healthy development of online teaching (Zhan Dechen, 2020).

School-based teaching management is mainly embodied in two aspects. First, teachers use quantitative data of students' learning for analysis, integration, and diagnostic evaluation to make

effective teaching feedback based on intelligent statistics, and to improve teaching design repeatedly. The second is the teaching supervision of administrators. Through the analysis of course data and various teaching statistics, visual teaching summaries and teaching management are carried out to comprehensively evaluate the situation of science, technology and teaching and learning.

Online teaching based on the Internet has played an important role in the epidemic period and has gradually become an indispensable part of the teaching process. In the post-epidemic period, the effective integration of this teaching model and traditional classroom remains to be explored. Blended teaching is not simply "online + offline" learning, but needs to take activities as an opportunity to integrate online and offline systematically. Taking this as the starting point, this paper analyses the characteristics of online teaching and blended teaching mode during the epidemic period and explores the new blended teaching mode based on activity design in the post-epidemic period from the three dimensions of influencing factors of student learning effect, blended teaching design and teaching management, so as to internalise this teaching mode into a "new normal".

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