

Using SPOC Blended Learning to Improve the Shortcomings of Current Middle School English Reading Teaching

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Abstract

This article is based on the SPOC theory (Small Private Online Courses) to study the current situation and problems of middle school English teaching, and explore the advantages and challenges of modern information technology in middle school English teaching. On this basis, specific strategies and methods are proposed to integrate SPOC teaching into daily English reading classrooms, aiming to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching.

Keywords

The SPOC Teaching Model; Teaching Reading; High School Students.

1. The Connotation and Alue of the Spoc Model

SPOC is the abbreviation for Small Private Online Course, which refers to online courses offered by small and private organizations. It is a learning model derived from Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). The application of MOOCs promotes the exchange and sharing of global educational resources, but also brings certain challenges: many students drop out of MOOC classrooms during the learning process, and the quality of the courses is also questioned. Many experts and scholars believe that MOOCs have limitations in the implementation process, such as low completion rates, high costs, inability to adapt to personalized learning for students, and lack of teacher-student interaction [1]. So, a new teaching model - SPOC - emerged to solve the problems of traditional teaching and MOOC. Its biggest advantage is that for students, they can better participate in the learning process, improve their motivation and learning efficiency; For teachers, SPOC can assist in supervising students and freely set teaching progress and course grading management systems based on different students' preferences and actual needs. According to American scholar [2], SPOC=classroom+MOOC demonstrates a good integration of online and classroom teaching.

In short, SPOC, as a new model, overturns traditional teaching methods and provides students with a deeper learning experience. The teaching process under this mode should follow the principles of diversified teaching resources, student-centered teaching, diversified evaluation methods, and diversified interactive channels [3]. Construct from three teaching stages: pre-class, while-class, and post-class.

2. Analysis of the Shortcomings and Reasons in Current Middle School English Reading Teaching

In today's digital and information-based era, high school English reading teaching still faces unique challenges and difficulties. Most teaching focuses on exam-oriented values, using traditional teaching methods and mechanically repetitive teaching processes (most of which are: skimming, identifying the main ideas, explaining knowledge points in segments, group activities, summarizing). Students lack genuine reading, thinking, and explanation, as well as a certain understanding of background knowledge. Therefore, how to overcome the shortcomings in English reading teaching, improve students' English reading ability to thinking

level through reading training, enhance teaching quality and students' learning effectiveness, has become an urgent problem to be solved.

During the pre-class stage, most students only read the textbook content, and a very small number of them will consult relevant materials to supplement their background knowledge. Moreover, the reading materials used in current English teaching are dull, and teachers lack awareness of utilizing extracurricular resources and creating reading contexts, resulting in low enthusiasm for learning among students.

During the while-class stage, teachers in traditional reading classrooms are immersed in explaining language points. This is to some extent influenced by teaching methods (such as the direct method: when new words appear, teachers use a series of methods to convey meaning, such as gestures, pictures, teaching aids, etc., to help students establish a direct connection between vocabulary and meaning; grammar is taught through induction rather than deduction, and students need to summarize grammar from a large number of examples, sometimes the teacher may not even explain grammar rules at all). However, the National English Curriculum Standard emphasizes discourse based teaching: language learning should not be based on isolated words or sentences, but on discourse. Teachers should guide students to fully utilize discourse knowledge to effectively acquire and convey information, express viewpoints and attitudes, and achieve the goal of using language to communicate and interact with others. However, there are still many teachers who lack genuine thinking and interpretation of texts and discourse, unable to explore truly useful connotations, resulting in a lack of immersion in reading classrooms, relatively dull learning content, and hindering students' ability to receive reading training at the level of real thinking.

During post-class stage. Students' after-school training mainly focuses on mechanical exercises, making it difficult to apply what they have learned to practice. Meanwhile, the lack of a scientific evaluation system is also one of the reasons for the insufficient teaching of popular science English reading [4]. Most teachers use quizzes to provide brief evaluations based on grades, neglecting the importance of process evaluation, resulting in inaccurate grasp of students' learning outcomes.

In summary, through analysis, it can be concluded that the main problems in current middle school English reading teaching are insufficient preparation and accumulation before class, low enthusiasm for learning during class, dull and uninteresting content, lack of exercise and improvement in thinking quality, and lack of contextual application after class.

3. English Reading Teaching Design based on SPOC

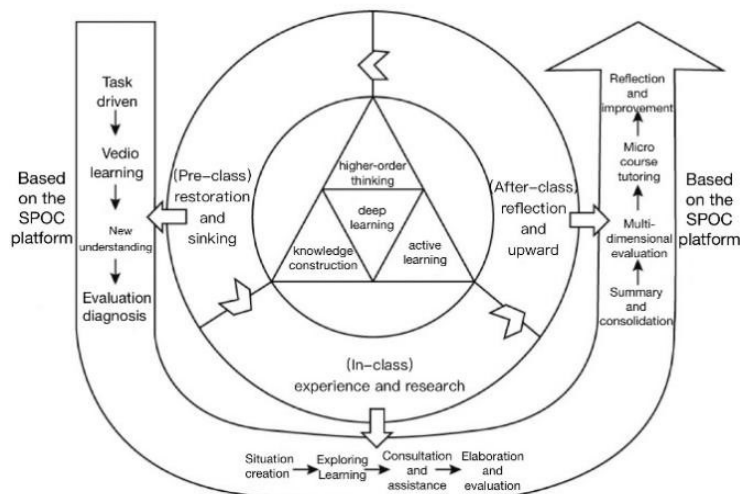


Figure 1. U-shaped structure

Due to the limited online learning time for middle school students, this teaching design adopts a combination of offline led and online assisted teaching modes. Taking the first unit text "Food for Thought" from Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press High School English Compulsory Course 2 as an example.

Based on the U-shaped structure proposed by Guo Yuanxiang [5]: restoration and sinking, experience and exploration, reflection and floating, three stages of online teaching before class, offline teaching during class, and online learning after class have been designed to help students deeply experience the complete learning process of English reading.

3.1. Pre-reading Online Teaching

The teacher sent materials and self-study videos related to food units to the students in the WeChat group. The difficulty of learning materials is consistent with the existing knowledge level of high school students. Require students to complete self-study before class and encourage them to self-study and expand their learning.

3.2. While-reading Offline Teaching

Firstly, the teacher provides students with knowledge quizzes and classroom supplements based on their self-study before class. Then, the teacher instructs the students to use reading methods such as skimming, scanning, and close reading to organize them to complete the reading task, enabling them to quickly grasp the main idea, find detailed information, and reason about words. At the same time, the teacher raised some inspiring questions to help students read (such as: What are the main differences between our traditional food culture and Western food culture? How should we treat food, even food from different countries? What values should we establish?). Finally, a classroom discussion will be held to allow students to share their ideas on how to treat our traditional food and food from other countries. The teacher will then summarize and elevate the topic, proposing the concept of "multicultural perspectives". This can stimulate students' interest in learning and improve their expression and thinking abilities. During the discussion process, teachers should monitor the progress of group discussions in real time and provide guidance if necessary.

3.3. Post-reading Online Teaching

Teachers post extracurricular reading tasks online (such as presenting relevant reading resources, chatting about feelings and comparisons), expanding students' reading volume, indirectly enhancing their interest in English reading, and also expanding their English vocabulary and knowledge accumulation.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Result

SPOC blended learning is an innovative and interesting new model. Under the subtle influence of the combination of online and offline learning, students have a stronger motivation to learn independently before the class, because completing the tasks assigned by the teacher before class is the foundation of classroom reading teaching. They can only smoothly integrate into the classroom by conscientiously completing the tasks before class. Otherwise, classroom activities will be difficult for students; During the class, SPOC teaching adopts diverse and pluralistic teaching strategies to cultivate students' abilities in information acquisition, critical thinking, and cross-cultural communication. After the class, with the help of the rich extracurricular reading materials and book lists provided by online platforms, students' reading ability has been greatly improved, and their learning confidence has also been greatly enhanced.

4.2. Shortcomings

The results of this study can provide certain theoretical and practical references for middle school English reading teaching. However, due to limited theoretical knowledge and research capabilities, there are still some issues in this study.

Firstly, the number of research subjects selected is insufficient to ensure the universality of the research results; Secondly, the research methods are limited and fail to take into account uncontrollable factors in the reading teaching process, such as teachers' proficiency in multimedia technology, home school cooperation and participation, social environment, etc. Furthermore, the research duration is relatively short, and the online learning time of students is limited, so the collected data is not comprehensive enough.

Therefore, for future teaching research and improvement of teaching strategies, it is necessary to approach from a more rigorous and comprehensive perspective, adopt more professional methods for data processing and analysis, and make the research more authentic, credible, and effective.

5. Epilogue

The teaching of SPOC blended English reading breaks the dominant position of teachers and emphasizes student-centered learning, highlighting the cultivation of students' language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability, namely the four core competencies. In this teaching mode, the entire classroom utilizes advanced science and technology to closely link the three stages of pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading, making students' English reading more systematic. At the same time, teachers not only impart basic English knowledge and skills to students, but also provide political and moral education. It is a new teaching model worth promoting and learning, and it also needs to be constantly updated and developed.

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