

# Research on the Path to Improve Students' Cross-Cultural Communication Skills under the SPOC Blended Teaching Model

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**Abstract:** With the coming of internationalized 2.0 new era, more and more attention was paid to the educational modernization and new requirements are made to nowadays vocational and technical education. SPOC (Small Private Online Course) is a new teaching model which is limited, effective, purpose oriented and flexible. It can solve many problems impeding the implementation of many oral English learning abilities. According to the requirements of Higher Vocational College English Curriculum Standards, cross-cultural communication skill is the core competence of this subject. We must pay attention to and do much work to practice students' cross-cultural communication skills. SPOC can help overcome many difficulties and improve students' relevant abilities. This paper will mainly talk about the concrete ways to improve students' cross-cultural communication skills with the help of SPOC.

**Keywords:** educational modernization; SPOC; cross-cultural communication

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## 1. Introduction

College education is the final learning for most college students before they stepping in their career <sup>[1]</sup>. So, in college students must learn many things fit in the requirements of the industry. With the development of international trade and business and the deep communication with foreigners all around the world. As the new era technical and skilled personnel, college students must keep pace with the industry requirements and make them more prepared. The new development and communication trends require students can not only express personal wanting, but also carry out effective cross-cultural communications to present cultural confidence and respect other people's culture from other countries which can help students make more effective communications. But the current situation is that many college English teachings lay attention on paper testing and lay less attention on practical usage of English. And the class English teaching is more related with paper testing, such as the CET4, CET6 and the upgrading examination, less related with the fostering of cross-cultural communications which is very important for their future career. As college English teaching person, more attention should be paid to and search for useful methods to solve this problem.

## 2. SPOC teaching model

### 2.1. Flexibility

SPOC online learning courses are made according to the different requirements of students' in different majors. Teachers record many online learning videos. Students could learn at any time when they have free time which can break the limitation of time and places and students could learn repetitively until they grasp key points and make it easier to carry out later days relevant leaning<sup>[2]</sup>.

### 2.2. Diversity

On SPOC online learning courses, teachers could prepare many class activities according to the usage requirement of their English class teaching. Such as before class testing to know well students' English levels, after class testing to know well teachers teaching results. The online group English leaning abilities, online learning tasks and online evaluation and so on. These online learning activities can make the English class teaching more effective.

### 2.3. Goal-oriented

SPOC, small private online course, is an online class with specific goal which pay attention to different aspects and mean to improve students' abilities in a specific aspect. Such as the writing SPOC online class used to improve students' English writing abilities, the oral SPOC online class used to improve students' English oral abilities and the reading SPOC online class used to improve students' English reading abilities. All SPOC online classes are designed to improve students' different English learning abilities and used to improve their specific abilities.

## 3. Cross-cultural abilities

As the international communication is becoming deeper and deeper, more requirements are given to English teaching and English class. Cultural understanding and communication ability are the main and key aspects in students' English comprehensive abilities<sup>[3]</sup>. Cross-cultural communication skill is not only the promoting factor in the area of students' English leaning aspects, but also the demonstrating aspect of students' overall abilities. Furthermore, it can make a great difference in students' future career development. Yet, students' cross-cultural communication skills are relatively weaker comparing with their other English abilities. And the reasons are as following<sup>[4]</sup>.

### 3.1. Paper-based examinations dominated

In China, from elementary school to college, attentions are always laid on paper tests. Few attentions are laid on oral communication. Most students learn English mainly take it as a tool to pass the English test and get higher education. And at present domestic English tests are main focused on reading, writing and translating<sup>[2]</sup>. Less attentions are paid to oral or cross-cultural communication skills for which we must pay attention to and cultivate practical talents. In the same time help them adapt to the career requirements to fit in their future job.

### 3.2. Less of professional knowledge

Nowadays English is mainly a public teaching subject in higher vocational colleges. As a public English course, it lacks major knowledge. Yet major related English knowledge is very important for students' future career. Moreover, the current English teaching classes lack relevant working situations and could not do well in the aspect to broaden their career related problems dealing abilities. As a result, students don't have much interests and just learn to cope with English tests. Yet their future career requires much more to use English practically that is the reason way labor market's demands are inappropriate to college's education.

### **3.3. Teaching time limited**

College English (maybe in other countries use different names, such as practical English) is a public compulsory class which only taught once a week with two credits a week. As a result, students' time to learn English is very limited. Students don't have enough time to practice and to think deeply with the knowledge learned during their English classes<sup>[5]</sup>.

### **3.4. Outdated teaching methods**

In the information era college education should be highly informational and should lead students to adapt to nowadays high-tech learning ways. But in fact, nowadays most of college education is outmoded which rely much on textbook teaching. In the process of textbook learning teachers are dominated and students nearly have no independent thinking time. So, the teaching methods must be improved to fit nowadays' era requirements.

### **3.5. Lack of teaching and training resources**

English learning needs much resources to broaden their horizons. And English class is a way to help students know well of the world. English teachers are the guide to lead students to know well of foreign cultures and let students to have correct world viewpoints. Yet in fact the teaching and training resources are very limited, and students don't have enough opportunities to practice.

## **4. Methods to improve students' cross-cultural abilities with SPOC**

### **4.1. More online learning resources**

With the help of online teaching and learning resources the learning time could be more flexible. When comes English teaching the credits are not enough for students to develop their comprehensive English abilities. As college teachers, we should make more online learning resources to encourage students learn after class and to arrange their time according their personal learning habits or class arrangements. On the other hand, the teacher should know well of students' learning importance and key knowledge and to make more useful learning video materials accordingly. Learning materials on SPOC learning platform could let students have more learning opportunities. Apart from class learning and students could choose leaning time, learning place and leaning materials accordingly to deepen their class knowledge understanding<sup>[6]</sup>.

### **4.2. Evaluate learning effects more scientifically**

With SPOC online learning platform students could build a comprehensive evaluation system. This evaluation system not only include online test and homework checking, but also bring in group work, online communication and multi-dimensional evaluation. In the evaluation process the teacher could know well of students' leaning effects and also let students know well of their personal leaning so as to adjust their English knowledge learning in time and have better learning results. Such as for students with poor oral communication abilities teachers could give them more practices opportunities to improve their spoken English.

### **4.3. Add more professional knowledge**

As we all know, college English is a public course. So, it may involve little professional knowledge. Yet students future career requires students to grasp more professional knowledge to make it easier for their future career. To solve this problem teachers, need to know well of students' career requirements and add more related knowledge according to their future career requirements. By learning professional knowledge on SPOC platform students could be more prepared for their future job. In the same time English teachers should learn more industry knowledge, to learn more with industry instructors and be more prepared to answer industry questions.

#### **4.4. Increase beneficial guidance in exams**

To get a credit or a good mark students may pay more attention to final exams. To gain better learning effects teachers could increase oral test to activate students train their spoken English. English teachers could take advantage of SPOC English leaning platform to better the formative assessment and lead students to communicate with English.

#### **4.5. Set more scenario situations**

In the process of English teaching teachers should set more scenario simulations related to their future career and global communication and provide multi-cultural communications. For example, as for students major in Cross-Border Electronic Commerce, the teacher could set the scenarios such as business negotiation, international meeting and cross-cultural cooperation. By training on SPOC platforms students could know more of future career requirements and be more prepared<sup>[7]</sup>.

#### **4.6. Innovate teaching methods**

Depending on SPOC online learning platforms teachers could build an “online pre-class virtual learning--offline in-class learning--online after-class review” learning pattern to let students learn continuously to increase their effective learning time and take full advantage of online learning resources.

### **5. Expected learning effects with SPOC online learning platform**

#### **5.1. Increase students' class participation rate**

By learning on the SPOC learning platform pre-class students could know more about the knowledge taught in the class. The evaluation function with SPOC could also let students know well of their learning states to adjust timely and grasp more knowledge.

#### **5.2. Decrease learning helplessness psychology**

Most students of higher vocational colleges are poor with their English. As a result, they lack learning confidence and don't think they could improve. Some of them even think it's useless for them to learn and improve their English abilities. With SPOC online learning could greatly change this situation. As students could choose resources to learn according to their personal interests and could learn repetitively. SPOC online learning platform also provides online practice materials closely related with their future career that is very useful to improve students' English leaning confidence and change their helpless psychology.

#### **5.3. Foster critical thinking**

Learning on the SPOC platform is student-centered, on which students could arrange their leaning time and choose things to learn online. Apart from that students could also have their own thoughts towards different subjects and topics. In the same time to express their own thought in English that could greatly improve students' critical thinking.

#### **5.4. Broaden international horizons**

By leaning in different scenarios set according to their future career requirements students' international horizons could be broadened greatly. By oral practices on SPOC leaning platform, students' abilities to communicate with foreigners could be improved greatly which will help students to achieve their English leaning goals<sup>[8]</sup>.

## **6. Conclusion**

SPOC online leaning platform is an outcome and achievement in the era of information which could improve the current

situation of English leaning and help better the English leaning effects <sup>[9]</sup>. In the internationalized world, students need to learn to communicate with foreigners and improve their cross-culture communication abilities which could improve their overall English proficiency and help to make their future career develop more fluently <sup>[10]</sup>.

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