

Exploration of the Implementation of SPOC Blended Learning Model in the Teaching System of Choral Conducting

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Abstract: The SPOC model (Small Private Online Course) is a new teaching model first proposed by Professor Armando Fox from the University of California, Berkeley. The application of the SPOC teaching model can supplement the shortcomings of the original choral conducting course system, refine knowledge points, expand choral conducting practices, enrich course learning and evaluation, and facilitate the internalization of choral conducting knowledge, teacher-student interaction, and student-student interaction, while forming a developmental teaching evaluation of the course. This paper analyzes and explores the practice of the SPOC blended learning model in the choral conducting teaching system from three aspects: the construction of the SPOC blended learning model, the course implementation path, and the practical significance.

1. Construction of the SPOC Blended Teaching Model

1.1 SPOC Blended Teaching Model Promotes Mutual Learning between Teachers and Students

"SPOC is a blended learning model that combines classroom teaching with online learning. In the classroom, students can be divided into several project groups to complete the learning of classroom subject content. By incorporating the SPOC blended teaching model into the choir and conducting classroom, and combining the choral works in the elementary and secondary school basic music textbooks, a project division system is implemented. Each piece of work is assigned to a project group, which completes lesson planning, work singing, rehearsal, arranging, training, and stage presentation through independent discussions. The application of the SPOC blended teaching model is an upgrade based on the summary of the early choral conducting course teaching model research experience, and it is also an expansion of the course teaching model. At present, the reform and development of basic education in our country have initially achieved results. The methods of higher education should keep pace with the times. The application of the SPOC blended teaching model can help students further understand the current status and needs of basic education and social education, enhance students' new curriculum teaching ability, and strengthen students' teaching awareness. Through a cyclical model of problem inspiration - demonstration - skill mastery - re-inspiration of the problem, students are encouraged to reach a virtuous cycle of

continuous improvement of professional ability, practical ability, and teaching ability."^[1]

"SPOC is the product of MOOC combined with offline classrooms, which involves online theoretical course learning and offline practical classroom teaching. Compared to traditional classroom teaching, SPOC has its own unique advantages. SPOC classroom learning can adopt a flipped classroom approach. The external flip puts pre-class learning outside the classroom and flips the learning outside the classroom with the teaching inside. This can be guided by a task list model, and then the theoretical knowledge is consolidated through classroom discussions, rapid Q&As, concentrated reports, and so on. The internal flip lets students learn theoretical knowledge of the course in advance through online courses, complete pre-class tasks assigned by teachers, and address problems encountered during self-study through teacher answers and team discussions. Teachers can also quickly understand students' learning progress and knowledge acquisition ability by using teaching platforms or watching students' video and audio homework in advance, and they can adjust teaching methods in time to effectively solve cognitive difficulties for students of different levels. Through small-scale focused discussion learning, SPOC allows teachers and students or students to communicate face-to-face, propose their own opinions on the issues studied, and collectively generate sparks of knowledge, promoting mutual learning between teachers and students."

"Through the permeation of the SPOC blended teaching model, 'Choral Conducting' clarifies the learning tasks of each stage or each class of online courses. Offline course teachers can provide targeted guidance according to the abilities of individual students or groups, regularly check teaching effectiveness, improve teaching methods, and increase student participation in class through interactive teaching models. When teachers design teaching content per semester, they make the content of online and offline courses more organized and systematic, effectively guiding students to form a theoretical support system for choral conducting courses and providing a scientific theoretical basis for later course practice. The course evaluation each semester feeds back teaching effects and provides a reference for teachers to adjust teaching methods, forming a positive 'teaching' and 'learning' cycle between teachers and students."

1.2 SPOC Blended Teaching Model Enhances the Teaching Evaluation Method

In course teaching evaluations, teachers' individual evaluations of students cannot fully reflect the learning outcomes of the course. Improving the teaching evaluation model can comprehensively promote the enhancement of teaching quality. During the teaching process, both teachers and students are participants in teaching activities. The teacher's "teaching" and the student's "learning" are respectively the implementer and receiver of classroom activities. In the past, teachers' teaching outcomes were evaluated based on students' semester assessment results, lacking a process evaluation. This approach did not allow for a direct understanding of the effectiveness of each class and the problems that occurred during the teacher's teaching process. By using the SPOC teaching model, statistical analysis of the course learning situation can be carried out, understanding students' preference and acceptance levels for course content and teaching forms, and comprehensively evaluating teaching effectiveness. At the same time, students are the embodiment of a teacher's teaching effectiveness. In the classroom, they can directly perceive the teacher's teaching ability, teaching attitude, teaching skills, and innovative thinking in teaching. By utilizing the SPOC teaching model, the way students evaluate teaching can be improved, the evaluation criteria can be refined, and an interactive positive evaluation model between teachers and students can be formed. Together, these provide an effective basis for delivering a quality course and learning the course content effectively.

Currently, the final semester grade for "Choral Conducting" is composed of regular scores and

final exam scores, with regular scores accounting for 30% and final scores accounting for 70%. However, regular scores are largely based on attendance, lateness, and absences, which is somewhat one-sided. By using the SPOC teaching model to assign homework online, teachers can directly see students' conducting practices and choral performances throughout the semester or academic year. Through video or audio comparisons, teachers can assess students' learning attitudes and their seriousness towards the course. This improves the process evaluation of choral conducting course learning compared to previous evaluation standards. The group presentations each semester continue the course's initiative and participation, promoting students' continuous learning and reflecting the students as the main body of learning. At the same time, it effectively provides a formative evaluation of the learning of the choral conducting course^[2].

1.3 SPOC Blended Teaching Model Transforms Static Teaching Evaluation into Continuous Dynamic Evaluation

Through the group teaching format of SPOC, which runs through the entire learning process of choral conducting, regular recording of conducting and singing videos can help trace students' cognitive learning trajectories in the subject and individual areas of expertise. This process can help identify high-quality group combinations within the class, leveraging the exemplary power of students. Selecting excellent choral conducting videos or group singing videos for classroom playback, explanation, and discussion can serve as a course learning template, encouraging students to create a course learning environment characterized by healthy competition and mutual assistance.

During the learning process, students' individual learning interest, attitude, and efficiency may fluctuate like waves, and the learning atmosphere of each class may change accordingly. Therefore, teachers cannot judge students' overall learning abilities based on a single presentation, a single answer to a question, or a single assessment in class. With the integration of the SPOC blended teaching model into the classroom, teachers can closely monitor the overall learning trends of the class or individual students through group presentations or online course reviews. They can grasp the psychological changes in students' learning of the course, timely adjust teaching methods for after-class or in-class remediation, constantly keep the teaching content up to date, and improve their own teaching abilities to attract students' attention to the course.

By applying the SPOC blended teaching model in the course study of chorus conducting, students can directly see the teachers' and classmates' evaluation of their own learning attitudes, reflect on the gains in the classroom, and adjust their learning states. Teachers can also optimize classroom teaching continuously based on student feedback. Teachers can publish periodic course learning survey reports on the SPOC online platform. From the feedback on students' evaluation of the teacher's teaching, they can understand whether their teaching abilities and methods meet students' learning needs. They can also understand students' preference for the course of chorus conducting, accumulate teaching experience, improve their own teaching systems, and continuously optimize the quality of classroom teaching in a dynamic manner.

2. The Implementation Path of the SPOC Teaching Mode in the "Choir Conducting" Course

2.1 Strengthen the integration of pre-class learning resources, fully foster students' choral mindset, and enhance the awareness of "proactiveness".

The Choral Conducting course is a highly practical specialized course. Throughout the entire course study period, it emphasizes continuous practice to strengthen professional operations. Teachers formulate teaching plans by semester, organize pre-class learning points according to the content of each stage, and release pre-class preview content. The "Choral Conducting" course is

divided into two parts: choral and conducting. It is grounded on theoretical knowledge and transformed into practice, with anticipation being one of the necessary abilities for conducting. Currently, high-quality online courses on choral conducting in Chinese universities are being continuously improved. Many renowned conducting teachers in universities have recorded videos and made online courses. Teachers can select relevant learning videos based on the semester's teaching content and students' learning progress, focusing on the key and difficult points of the course to design progressive pre-class teaching videos from easy to difficult. After production, these can be shared through online learning platforms like WeChat class groups, Tencent Meetings, Rain Classroom, or QQ groups. According to their own learning cognition abilities, students can watch these videos for autonomous pre-class learning.^[3]

Choral singing is a specialized discipline that integrates knowledge of multiple voice parts. A single-threaded mode of thinking cannot satisfy the demands of learning choral music; teachers need to cultivate a three-dimensional mode of thinking in students during the course of learning, transforming horizontal lines into vertical three-dimensional thinking. Multiple voice parts need to coexist simultaneously in the mind of the choral conductor. While treating choral works with "undivided attention," there also needs to be a "multitasking" mode of thinking in order to handle the coexisting multiple voice parts in choral works, ensuring smoothness and ease in the process of conducting choral pieces. Through the SPOC online platform, teachers can assign choral singing homework like listening to melodies of other voice parts while singing their own, or conducting exercises such as conducting one voice part while singing another, to cultivate a mode of thinking that can handle multiple melodies simultaneously.

When teachers prepare pre-class learning resource integration, they should focus on the teaching outline of "Choir and Conducting" for each term. Through the SPOC blended teaching model, they can refine the phased teaching objectives, teaching tasks, teaching requirements, etc., and assign pre-class homework. They can plan the different knowledge points in the course as a whole, and guide students to complete pre-class preparation by making PPTs, recording "rehearsal talks", conducting videos, singing videos, etc., as a group. This helps students form an early awareness, transforming the key points of classroom learning into their own systematic and coherent learning resource library in advance. This is conducive for teachers to effectively improve teaching efficiency in the classroom, steadily and orderly arrange classroom and semester teaching tasks, and prompt students to quickly integrate the knowledge they have prepared in advance into the classroom, mastering and digesting the teacher's teaching content.

2.2 Design a blended teaching plan to promote the integration of online and offline teaching in the classroom.

SPOC plays a role in integrating the advantages of traditional classroom teaching and online education, making it a blended teaching model that combines online and offline components. With thorough pre-class preparation, the classroom instruction utilizes various teaching methods such as group collaboration, performance observation, conducting practice, and presentation of completed works. This fosters a collaborative learning environment between teachers and students, where they collectively explore questions, seek optimal vocal timbres for works, design conducting diagrams for pieces, and showcase the acoustic effects of performances. Students become the focal point of the classroom while teachers guide the learning process. By raising common issues in choral conducting, students are encouraged to think critically, analyze problems independently, and develop problem-solving skills^[4].

The course "Choral Singing and Conducting" is a mandatory subject in the music curriculum of general higher education institutions. Through studying this course, students are taught to master

the basic patterns of choral conducting, forming a scientific knowledge system of choral conducting; it develops students' abilities to design choral conducting diagrams and apply the basic skills of choral conducting to the direction of works of different styles and categories. The course guides students to understand the methods of choral training, enhancing their singing ability, teamwork, and communication skills, and strengthening their team spirit. They learn the steps of setting up class choirs and campus children's choirs, equipping them with the ability to form and train a choir. Students also study how to conduct works of different styles, to understand the connotations of the works, and are encouraged to explore the aesthetic and ideological points in the pieces, thus enhancing their aesthetic perception, broadening their thinking in choral teaching, and understanding the current state of choral singing in basic education and the choral pieces in primary and secondary school music textbooks. The course also includes designing teaching plans, practicing lesson delivery, and mastering the process of choral classroom teaching.

However, there are differences in the individual level of learning and acceptance of students in the class. Using the SPOC teaching model, the teaching content is divided into three modules: primary, intermediate, and advanced. Through the classroom chorus command stage test, groups are formed according to the actual level of students, teaching plans are formulated, learning tasks of equal difficulty are assigned, and targeted teaching is carried out in combination with echelon advanced and layered teaching modes. Driven by classroom tasks, students apply and practice the knowledge they have learned to complete the internalization of knowledge.

2.3 Pay attention to after-class development of courses to improve students' knowledge and cognition

The application of the SPOC teaching mode can fully expand the after-class teaching link of the "Chorus and Conducting" course. Teachers can use network resources to find corresponding singing or conducting exercises based on the chorus or conducting content of the works learned in the classroom, and conduct pre-class exercises and in-class exercises. Afterwards, expand the exercises to test the effectiveness of the class and consolidate classroom knowledge. At the same time, teaching evaluation and teaching reflection can be carried out to find problems in the classroom. Teachers guide students to find diverse solutions through online feedback.

Post-class extensions can be designed according to different levels of teaching content, accommodating individual differences among the students, such as their knowledge base, learning level, and learning abilities, with the complexity of their coursework divided into three tiers accordingly. High-level choral conducting homework is primarily completed by students majoring in choral conducting, who have proficient abilities in choral conducting and training. They are responsible for conducting the more difficult choral works, assisting teachers in class choral rehearsals, and mastering the characteristics and training methods of various ensemble choral teams. Intermediate-level choral conducting homework is mainly completed by students in the class who have a strong aptitude for, and love of, choral conducting. They are in charge of executing medium-difficulty children's choral works, understanding the methods and techniques for training children's choirs, as well as the procedures for forming school choral teams. The elementary-level choral conducting homework is designed for students in the class with weaker practical abilities. They should master the basic conducting patterns of common beats, using music textbooks from elementary and secondary school education, familiarize themselves with the choral songs of each school stage, understand the melodies of each voice part, and practice both singing and conducting. Teachers distribute homework in stages, and group members collaborate to complete the choral conducting assignments. Based on the students' feedback, teachers can flexibly adjust the teaching content and manage the pace of learning. After students have completed the choral conducting

content that matches their own level, they can progress to learn content of other difficulty levels, thereby stimulating their learning motivation, tapping into their learning potential, and breaking through their self-imposed learning limits^[5].

3. The significance of integrating SPOC into the teaching mode of chorus and conducting courses

3.1 Use the SPOC hybrid teaching mode to improve the online course construction of "Chorus and Conducting"

SPOC, or Small Private Online Course, is a new concept in online learning that was proposed following MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). The choir conducting course utilizes the SPOC teaching model to delve deeper and broaden the scope of the existing knowledge points in the choir and conducting course. This is achieved through interactive teacher-student explanations, which greatly reinforce the combination of theoretical knowledge points with choir conducting practice. The limited classroom learning time is extended beyond the classroom, effectively utilizing students' out-of-class time, expanding the teaching space, and integrating modern technology with the breadth and depth of teaching. This enriches the previous hybrid teaching model that was primarily based on "MOOCs", thereby further promoting curriculum teaching reform.

In the traditional "Chorus and Conducting" class, there is a large class system. There are 70 or 80 people in two classes. The students have different learning ability, acceptance ability and absorption ability. The teaching time of two consecutive classes of 80 minutes is limited. It is difficult to realize "teaching students in accordance with their aptitude" in the course. The application of the SPOC hybrid teaching mode can make up for this shortcoming. Students with similar levels are divided into a group for group echelon teaching. The hierarchical teaching method can "tailor-made" for students. "Learning content, while periodic teaching feedback and teaching evaluation feedback can provide reference for teachers to regularly adjust teaching content based on students' situations and improve the online course "Chorus and Conducting".

3.2 Integrate SPOC's flipped classroom teaching mode into the chorus conducting class to explore the "project cooperation" teaching mode

By employing the SPOC blended teaching model, the choir works are "projectized" in the choir and conducting class, enhancing the students' ability to reorganize knowledge and train in the choir class. The teacher, as the project leader, pre-plans the total amount of knowledge students will acquire throughout the learning process. After analyzing the students' learning abilities, the total amount of knowledge is distributed over each term. Through the implementation and perfection of various choir conducting projects, students' professional skills in choir conducting and theoretical knowledge reserves are subtly and progressively strengthened. The goal is to reach the annual cumulative standard of knowledge through quantified accumulation each term. As project executors, students need to recognize their range of learning abilities. In accordance with the professional skill level assessment conducted by the teacher, they cooperate and implement the project task list issued by the teacher. Knowledge and skills are transformed by completing choir conducting projects. Students identify their best area of performance from the aspects of "singing", "conducting", "arranging", "training", "stage design", etc., in the project, while also identifying their weak areas. Through cooperation among project team members, they learn from each other's strengths to compensate for shortcomings and improve their professional skills.

The choir conducting course emphasizes practicality in the discipline. Teachers guide students to integrate various subjects, such as voice training, sight-singing and ear training, polyphony, and

work adaptation, into choral training through project collaboration. By exploring new teaching models like SPOC and breaking down teaching content, students are encouraged to reorganize interdisciplinary knowledge. The "project collaboration" model is used to foster students' innovative thinking, allowing them to autonomously complete work performances and conducting, thereby strengthening their team cooperation consciousness. From song selection, adaptation, scoring, singing, rehearsal, rhythm design to stage performance, all are jointly completed by team members. In the early stage of project implementation, each group can democratically elect a group leader and formulate team cooperation rules, which all group members must abide by. In the mid-term of project implementation, groups divide the work of performance and conducting, discussing the best performance method or designing the best conducting diagram. They also conduct mutual evaluation and scoring for all participating members. Members who do not participate in group activities receive a staged warning. In the later stages of implementation, the class conducts an overall performance assessment and evaluation, selecting outstanding student choir work adaptation projects and choir performance display projects. These are collected into a book, recorded onto a disc, or published on a course public account as a display of choir conducting course project results. This enhances students' sense of achievement and builds confidence in the subject.

Through the SPOC hybrid teaching mode, the singing and conducting of choral works will be implemented in each class and each group in the form of "project cooperation", and the combination of different forms of choral conducting practice will be strengthened, so that students can fully understand the connotation of choral conducting. In line with social needs, the foundation is laid for chorus conductor talents with all-round and simultaneous development.

4. Conclusion

By incorporating the SPOC blended teaching model into the choir conducting teaching process and through pre-class, in-class, and post-class modules, we can broaden the choir conducting teaching model. The implementation of the "project collaboration" approach to class group choir works enables students to become familiar with the process of choral training and truly master the steps of choral training. This changes the vague cognition in traditional teaching and forms scientific cognition in the choral training teaching system. To a certain extent, the SPOC blended teaching model can meet the learning needs of students at different levels. At the same time, it promotes teachers to change their teaching concepts, update teaching methods, enrich teaching materials, and improve teaching evaluations, thereby advancing the construction of online and offline course systems for "Choir and Conducting".

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