

A Survey on Learning Strategies of Online and Offline Blended Teaching of College English in Post-epidemic Era

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Abstract: After the epidemic, the author conducts a survey on the learning strategies of college English courses among Grade 2022 non-English major art undergraduate students at the author's school through interviews and questionnaires. The survey results show that the average scores of meta-cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social strategies of students who passed the CET-4 exam are higher than those who did not pass the CET-4 exam; Students who pass the CET-4 exam are better at using meta-cognitive strategies while those who did not pass the CET-4 exam are better at using social strategies, lack awareness of meta-cognitive strategy usage, and are not good at selecting appropriate meta-cognitive strategies based on learning situations. The results of this survey will enhance students' ability to use meta-cognitive strategies, enhance their ability to cooperate in learning, to learn independently, and strengthen the leading role of teachers. It is necessary to explore how to reasonably utilize the advantages of online and offline teaching and effectively combine the two based on the survey results of online teaching learning strategies.

Keywords: college English, meta-cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, social strategies, blended teaching

Introduction

The COVID-19 broke out suddenly during the Spring Festival in 2020. In order to stop the spread of the epidemic to the campus and ensure the safety and health of teachers and students, China's Ministry of Education (MOE) issued *The Guidelines on the Organization and Management of Online Teaching in Colleges and Universities during the Epidemic Prevention and Control* on February 5, 2020. According to a set of guidelines issued by the MOE, it should take the measures of government leading, university subjectivity and society participation to guarantee the online teaching in colleges and universities during the period of epidemic prevention and control, so as to realize the goal of "stopping classes and non-stop learning". The *Guidelines* clearly put forward the policy of "actively carrying out online teaching and online learning, so as to ensure the teaching progress and teaching quality during the epidemic prevention and control". As soon as the *Guidelines* was published, "online learning, online teaching", "stopping classes and non-stop learning" and other terms immediately became popular, and were constantly talked about among the teachers and major media. At the same time, most colleges and universities have announced the postponement of the start of school, and actively respond to the *Guidelines*, requiring teachers to prepare for online teaching.

In recent years, MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) has developed rapidly and become an emerging teaching model. Many universities both domestically and internationally have joined the MOOC. Domestic and foreign English

experts, scholars, and educators have also conducted extensive research on English teaching based on MOOCs. The research on English teaching of MOOCs in China mainly focuses on the following aspects: flipped classrooms, such as *Explorative Research on Flipped Classroom in Graduate English of the Minority University*^[9], *An Analysis of Contributing Factors of College English Flipped Classroom with MOOC Philosophy*^[2]; Teaching modes, such as *Research on Mixed College English Teaching Mode Based on Microlecture and MOOCs*^[10], *A Study on the MOOCs-based Blended Intercultural Foreign Language Teaching*^[6]; Teaching design, such as *Instructional Design of Foreign Language MOOCs from the Perspective of Systems Science*^[3], *Research on Teachers' Role in MOOC*^[5]; Teacher development, such as *Facing the Challenge and Flipping Ourselves-Opportunities and Challenges Faced by Foreign Language Teachers under the New Paradigm of Education*^[1] and *Opportunities and Challenges for the Professional Development of Foreign Language Teachers from the Perspective of Flipped Classroom*^[11]. With the increasing development of China's reform and opening up, the importance of foreign language teaching in universities has become more and more prominent. In the MOOC teaching environment, students' learning strategies and autonomous learning ability as individual factors have received increasing attention. Language learning strategies are the various strategies that learners adopt in order to achieve better language learning effects. In *Learner for learner autonomy*, WENDEN(1991) pointed out that second or foreign language autonomous learning ability refers to learners' ability to acquire learning strategies and knowledge, and is an attitude of efficiently and independently applying these strategies and knowledge^[8]. It can be seen that using learning strategies is a way to achieve autonomous learning. However, many students in universities have a weak awareness of choosing appropriate learning strategies to promote English learning, and their autonomy in English learning is poor, resulting in a significant amount of time spent on English learning but not significant learning effects. Studies have shown that students' learning strategies, English scores, and autonomous learning ability are correlated. Throughout domestic literature, research on students' learning strategies and autonomous learning under the MOOC teaching mode is lacking^[7].

Under the background of "COVID-19" and according to the *Guidelines*, combined with the online course teaching resources of our university, the Superstar Learning Online Platform was fully utilized for sign-in, discussion, testing, and assignments in the implementation of college English course teaching under the "COVID-19". This article aims to investigate the use of learning strategies by students under the "COVID-19", compare the differences in learning strategies between students who passed the CET-4 after the pandemic was lifted (December 10th, 2022) and those who failed, in order to improve students' awareness and enhance their autonomous learning ability in using learning strategies. In response to the shortcomings of online education, exploring how to reasonably utilize the advantages of online and offline teaching and effectively integrate the two, in order to improve the quality of college English teaching.

1. Research method

There are two main research paradigms in scientific research: quantitative research and qualitative research. In order to develop the advantages and avoid the disadvantages of the two research paradigms, this study intends to combine the two paradigms to analyze the collected data.

1.1 Survey tools

This survey adopts two survey methods: questionnaire and interview. OXFORD R (1989) classifies language learning strategies into Memory Strategies, Cognitive Strategies, Compensation Strategies, Meta-cognitive Strategies, Affective Strategies and Social Strategies^[4]. While MALLEYO&CHAMOT classifies language learning strategies into three categories: Cognitive Strategies, Meta-cognitive Strategies and Social Strategies. This study integrates their classification of language learning strategies, taking into account the learning characteristics of students under the MOOCs environment, and the author designs 31 items to investigate students' learning strategies from following three aspects: Cognitive Strategies, Meta-cognitive Strategies and Social Strategies. In order to deeply understand the feelings of the respondents and obtain more detailed feedback information to make up for the shortcomings of insufficient information provided in the questionnaire, interviews were organized on learning strategies, including what learning strategies students usually use in the process of learning college English courses online and the reasons for using these strategies.

1.2 Survey objects

The objects of this survey are the 2022 non-English major art undergraduate students of the author's school. When selecting the survey objects, factors such as level (class A/B), majors, and gender were taken into account as much as possible. The questionnaires were conducted among 193 students from the School of Music and Performance, the Academy of Arts & Design and the School of Physical Education who participated in the CET-4 on December 10, 2022. And 193 valid questionnaires were collected, among which 44 students passed the CET-4 and 149 students failed. In addition, 12 students from the three departments were interviewed (6 boys and 6 girls, 6 students who passed and 6 students who failed the CET-4).

1.3 Survey process

In February 2023, data from interviews and questionnaires were collected. Because both students and teachers can operate computers skillfully after the online course learning last three years, this survey adopts the way of questionnaire survey and interview through the Internet. During the interview, no one was disturbed. After obtaining the consent of the interviewees, the interviews were recorded and organized into written data immediately after the interviews were completed. Therefore, the data of this research is based on 193 valid questionnaires and 12 interview materials obtained through in-depth interviews.

1.4 Data analysis

In terms of data collection, this study chooses Questionnaire Star, a professional questionnaire survey platform, and the analysis of original data is provided by SPSSAU platform. The independent sample T-test is used to compare and analyze whether there are significant differences in the use of learning strategies among the students who have passed the CET-4 and the students who have not passed the CET-4. In addition, when analyzing the data, read the qualitative materials repeatedly to sort, filter and classify the qualitative data.

2. Survey results and discussion

The questionnaire on learning strategies adopts a five-level scale: 1 means "completely inconsistent"; 2 means "not usually"; 3 means "sometimes"; 4 means "usually"; 5 means "completely consistent". In the questionnaire, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 represent the score when a certain item is selected, that is, 1 point for 1, 2 points for 2, and so on.

2.1 Overall comparison of the use of learning strategies

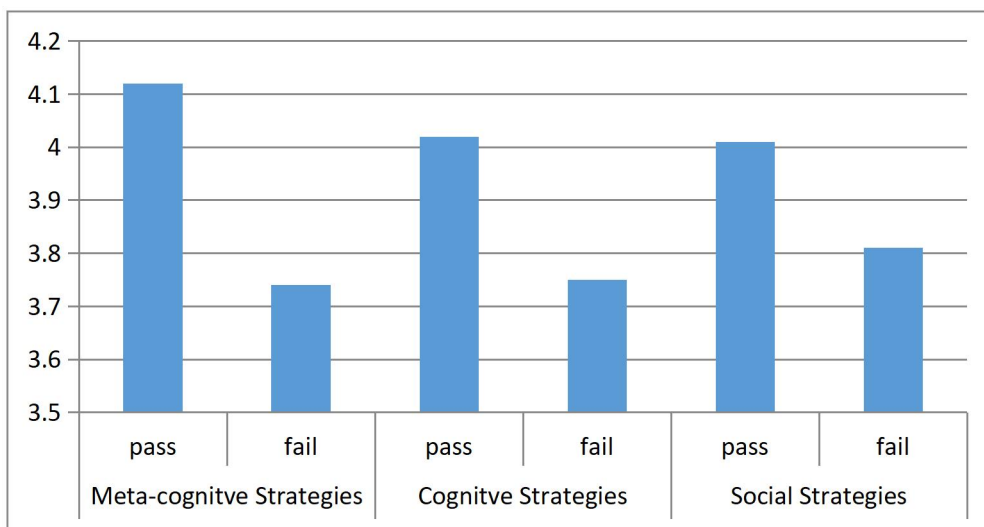


Figure 1 Overall comparison of the use of learning strategies by students who have passed CET-4 and those who have failed

From Figure 1, it can be seen that the average scores of meta-cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social strategies for students who passed the CET-4 and those who did not pass are between 3.5-4.1. According to OXFORD's explanation of the average scores of learning strategies, both students who passed and those who did not pass the CET-4 generally use these three strategies. The reasons for using these three strategies to improve average scores may be attributed to the following two points: firstly, during the online learning stage, it is a new learning method for some students and is a challenge for them. In order to ensure learning effectiveness and quality, they are trying to find suitable strategies for themselves. Secondly, schools and teachers have put forward requirements for online learning, and students try to find ways to meet the requirements and complete learning tasks. Learning data shows that during this time of online learning, students are conscious of using learning strategies. The average scores of meta-cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social strategies for students who passed the CET-4 are obviously higher than those who did not pass.

The average scores of three learning strategies of students who passed the CET-4 from high to low are meta-cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social strategies. The average scores of three learning strategies of students who failed the CET-4 from high to low are social strategies, cognitive strategies, and meta-cognitive strategies. This indicates that students who passed the CET-4 are more proficient in using meta-cognitive strategies, while students who failed the CET-4 lack awareness of using meta-cognitive strategies and are not good at selecting appropriate meta-cognitive strategies according to learning situations.

2.2 Comparison of meta-cognitive strategies

The data shows that there were significant differences ($P < 0.05$) between students who passed and those who did not pass the CET-4 exam in items 1, 5, 6, 12, 15, and 19. The top three meta-cognitive strategies items used by students who passed the CET-4 exam were: "I will reflect after finishing a learning task.", "I will draw up a study plan according to the goal." and "I can focus on the content when watching English course videos.". These data indicate that students who passed the CET-4 exam are better at using learning strategies such as study planning, self-management, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. The top three meta-cognitive strategies items used by students who did not pass the CET-4 exam were: "I can focus on the content when watching English course videos.", "I always complete tasks or homework right after class." and "I often evaluate myself on my learning progress, summarizing strengths and weaknesses.". The data shows that students who did not pass the CET-4 exam have a more positive attitude towards online learning, can conscientiously complete learning tasks and take the initiative to evaluate themselves and improve their learning status to improve learning outcomes. The average scores of the meta-cognitive strategies items used by students who passed and those who did not pass the CET-4 exam are both the lowest for the following items: "I will plan my study time for the English course seriously." and "I will take measures to improve the weak points in my study." This indicates that students have not fully realized the importance of College English as a basic compulsory course. After passing the CET-4 exam, students' enthusiasm for English learning decreases. While those who did not pass the exam are not good at planning their own English learning. In addition, students are not proactive in finding ways to adjust their learning methods and plans for their English learning weaknesses.

In an interview, a student who passed the CET-4 exam said, "In the process of learning English online, I make some learning plans. Because the course is time limits, I must finish all the knowledge within the deadline and understand it myself." Another student who also passed the CET-4 said, "I complete today's learning progress on time every day, reflect on the problems when taking notes and listening to lectures, evaluate my progress this week, and complete the homework, discussion, tests, and other tasks while grasping the content. I try to improve the problems encountered before the next lesson and prepare the necessary chapters for the next day's class the day before." A student who failed the CET-4 said, "I follow the teacher's pace according to the course schedule, without delaying in submitting homework, I carefully complete the homework assigned by the teacher in class, and do the unfinished tasks after class. But I didn't do well in reflecting on my learning." From this, it can be seen that both students who passed and failed the CET-4 are trying their best to complete various tasks of online learning.

2.3 Comparison of cognitive strategies

From the data, it can be seen that there is a significant difference ($P < 0.05$) among the students who passed and failed the CET-4 in items 23, 24, and 25. This indicates that the students who passed the CET-4 are better at reorganizing their knowledge by summarizing and organizing what they have learned, thereby deepening their memory, linking new and old knowledge to enhance deep processing of new knowledge, and deepening their understanding of new knowledge by organizing notes. Additionally, there is a significant difference between students who passed the CET-4 exam and those who do not in the item “I always take notes while watching videos or self-studying after class.”

A student who passed the CET-4 exam in an interview stated, “Taking notes and summarizing are good learning methods. As the saying goes, a good memory is not as good as bad writing. The summarized knowledge points can help us review better in the future.” Another student who passed the CET-4 exam also said: “During the course of listening, taking good notes and extracting key knowledge points can help deepen my impression of the knowledge I have learned and facilitate future review. After the course is over, comparing the notes taken in class to summarize and summarize the knowledge can help me better absorb relevant knowledge.” Another student who did not pass the CET-4 exam mentioned: “My English foundation is weak, and I am too lazy to take notes when watching videos and browsing course materials, unless the teacher requires it.” It can be seen that students who pass the CET-4 exam are better at using some refined processing strategies to digest knowledge and promote English learning.

2.4 Comparison of social strategies

The data shows that there is a significant difference ($P < 0.05$) between students who passed and those who did not pass the CET-4 exam in items 27 and 29. The data also indicates that students who passed the CET-4 exam tend to adopt social strategies more consciously in online learning environments. When facing learning difficulties, they seek help and cooperation from teachers or classmates and try their best to solve the problem. Students who did not pass the CET-4 exam tend not to pay much attention to finding ways to solve problems when encountering difficulties, which may be related to their learning habits and thinking patterns developed over a long period of time.

Both students who passed and failed the CET-4 exam can actively participate in discussions on various platforms, ask or answer questions. This may be related to the teacher’s requirements and evaluation methods for students. A student who passed the CET-4 exam in an interview said, “In the process of online learning, when encountering problems, I first see whether I can solve them by myself. The things I can solve will be solved as soon as possible. When encountering unfamiliar problems, I will ask classmates with stronger abilities for help. If we cannot solve the problem, we will ask the teacher to help. This way, all the problems can be solved, and learning will be more convenient.” A student who did not pass the CET-4 exam said, “When I encounter problems, I first search on the Internet, Baidu, and other search engines. If I can’t find a solution, I will ask classmates for help. If I still can’t solve it, I will post my questions on the discussion forum platform of the MOOC or seek help through QQ groups, WeChat groups, or directly private chat with the teacher.” Therefore, it can be seen that students who passed and failed the CET-4 exam are seeking learning help through various channels in the process of online learning.

3. Conclusion and insights

In summary, the average scores of meta-cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social strategies among students who passed the CET-4 exam are higher than those who did not pass. Students who passed CET-4 are better at using meta-cognitive strategies and more skilled in using learning strategies such as formulating study plans, self-management, self-monitoring, and self-assessment. Students who didn’t pass CET-4 are better at using social strategies but lack awareness in using meta-cognitive strategies and are not good at choosing appropriate meta-cognitive strategies based on learning situations.

However, this study was conducted on 193 non-English major art students from Grade 2022 who took the CET-4 on December 10th. The number of students was relatively small, the research time was short, and the representativity was not

particularly strong, and some aspects still require further exploration and research. Nevertheless, based on the summary of the table data, this survey provides the following insights for college English teaching:

Firstly, to enhance students' ability to use meta-cognitive strategies. If students want to ensure the effectiveness of online learning, they must improve their ability to apply meta-cognitive strategies. For example, at different stages of learning, students should develop specific and feasible long-term, medium, and short-term learning plans and goals based on different learning situations. And setting goals can help students maintain long-term learning enthusiasm and cultivate strong perseverance. In addition, in order to check whether they have achieved their own learning goals, students need to monitor their own learning process. Self-monitoring enables students to identify learning problems at different stages and adjust their learning plans based on the problems encountered. Through self-evaluation and self-reflection, they can understand their own learning progress, identify any weaknesses that still exist, and improve subsequent learning outcomes.

Secondly, to enhance students' ability of cooperative learning. The online learning environment creates more opportunities for students to express their opinions and cooperative learning. Cooperative learning can make students more autonomous, which helps to improve learning efficiency and experience the sense of achievement in successful learning. Students can establish cooperative learning groups based on learning interests, cognitive styles, and cognitive levels, and use tools such as the Internet, email, QQ groups, WeChat groups, etc. to collaborate and complete learning tasks, obtain answers, and so on.

Thirdly, to enhance students' autonomous learning ability. Compared with the traditional college English teaching mode, the college English course teaching mode based on various online learning platforms such as MOOCs requires students to have stronger autonomous learning ability. Teachers will help students understand the characteristics of online learning and make them aware of the importance of autonomous learning. Only in this way can students continuously adapt to the college English course learning based on various online learning platforms such as MOOCs, and enable them to choose appropriate learning strategies based on their own learning motivation and style.

Fourthly, to strengthen the leading role of teachers. The teaching mode of college English courses based on various online learning platforms such as MOOCs requires teachers to change their roles. Teachers should be the guides and facilitators for student learning, mobilize students' enthusiasm and initiative in online learning, help students clarify teaching goals, learning plans, and tasks, and guide students in choosing suitable online learning strategies and methods. Although there are abundant online resources, the leading and guiding role of teachers cannot be ignored.

Under the backdrop of the "COVID-19", college English courses learning based on various online learning platforms such as MOOCs is a very valuable learning experience for students. In order to adapt to online learning, students need to use appropriate learning strategies. This learning experience also provides valuable opportunities for students to cultivate their ability for autonomous learning and to examine their own learning. The teaching of college English courses based on various online learning platforms like MOOCs also provides inspiration and experience for future college English teaching. And teachers become the guides for students to master and use learning strategies. Only through the joint efforts of teachers and students can the quality of online teaching be ultimately guaranteed.

4. Suggestions

It is necessary to explore how to reasonably utilize the advantages of online and offline teaching and effectively combine the two based on the survey results of online teaching learning strategies. The blended online and offline teaching mode has emerged. Blended learning is a student-centered and personalized teaching mode that enhances learners' comprehensive development. It integrates the advantages of face-to-face learning and online learning, emphasizes the combination of teacher's guidance and student's autonomous learning. Compared with traditional face-to-face courses, blended learning courses, or courses that combine online and face-to-face activities, usually require more extra preparation time. Therefore, it is beneficial and necessary to select the best practice mode for this learning process.

The college English course adopts a combination of online and offline teaching. On the one hand, for some simple knowledge, students can be required to learn independently online. By previewing the learning materials transmitted by the teacher, they actively think about the difficulties and key points in learning. Students can use the network search function to build a framework of knowledge and develop their own learning methods. The way students acquire knowledge changes from passive teacher imparting to active exploration, greatly enhancing their initiative in learning and making them the main body of teaching activities, with teachers as the assistants. In addition, teachers can also establish a points system, refine the scoring standards, and score students' completion of online homework, motivating students to learn independently and improve the reward mechanisms.

On the other hand, in response to the issue of online teaching teachers being unable to monitor students' learning status, offline teachers can use classroom time to check students' self-learning effectiveness through questioning and testing, and provide timely feedback. At the same time, various forms such as Q&A and group discussions can be used to solve the difficult content that students cannot complete through self-study and consolidate teaching effectiveness.

The specific application of blended learning in college English teaching. First, pre-class preview. Before teaching, the teacher should choose appropriate course resources and formulate corresponding learning tasks based on the characteristics of the students and their existing English level. Students can complete the assigned tasks through independent thinking and group cooperation. At this stage, the teacher can effectively utilize the advantages of the platform, provide practical and effective online consultation, Q&A and other related activities to provide targeted assistance for students. This enables students to develop their independent exploration ability and self-learning ability under the guidance of teachers. In addition, in response to the current issues of poor connection between online and offline learning content, inconsistent activity themes, and lack of timely interaction and feedback between teachers and students in blended learning, pre-class tests can be set up before the online learning of a new unit to strengthen students' emphasis on classroom learning.

Second, classroom face-to-face teaching. Face to face teaching, also known as offline teaching, mainly involves the targeted integration of classroom teaching content with the learning of autonomous learning platforms, and the implementation of more effective multimedia assisted teaching. Firstly, the teacher should check and understand students' completion of pre-class preview tasks, and find problems and deficiencies. Secondly, the teacher should further raise questions based on the completion status of the tasks, arouse everyone's thinking, so as to stimulate students' deep thinking and exploration of relevant knowledge. Thirdly, the teacher should guide students to discuss the key and difficult points, and engage in situational dialogues, role-playing, and other related forms during this process, making students more enthusiastic and engaged in the classroom discussions. Finally, the teacher should guide students to summarize and reflect, logically summarizing the learning contents, and let students do self-evaluation and mutual evaluation. In this process, the constantly consolidate the learned knowledge, further improve the ability to apply knowledge and the ability to collaborate and assist each other.

Third, review and consolidate after class. The end of the class does not mean the end of teaching. After offline classroom teaching, teachers should conduct assessment, teaching management, error correction, and classroom extension. For example, teachers can supplement relevant reading materials, audio and video content, etc. based on students' classroom performance on learning content, broaden students' horizons, and further deepen students' understanding and mastery of related knowledge. At the same time, by reviewing lots of materials, students can strengthen their learning effectiveness, improve their autonomous learning ability, and lay a solid foundation for cultivating lifelong learning habits.

The implementation of blended online and offline teaching in universities is in line with the development needs of the times and the inevitable requirements of teaching reform. Applying this model to English teaching in universities can improve students' autonomous learning ability, enhance classroom interaction and communication, effectively improve the quality of teaching, and reflect the charm of modern education. With the continuous development of network information technology, English teaching in universities will inevitably go further on the road of educational informatization. The blended online and offline teaching mode will also be continuously optimized and improved to improve teaching quality.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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