

## Research on MOOC Production in College English Teaching

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### Abstract

**Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have undergone great development in China. MOOC attracts many learners because of its unique advantages. This article provides an example of the MOOC production process within the New Progressive College English Integrated Course, showing the whole procedure including the selection of the teaching team to the final on-line running. The article examines our lesson sharing and experiences in order to boost the MOOC's construction as well as the application and population of the MOOC design.**

### Keywords

**MOOC, production, procedures.**

### 1. Introduction

In April 2019, a Chinese MOOC Conference was held in Beijing that was sponsored by the Ministry of Education and included the collaboration of many institutions. The theme of this conference was how to recognize and respond to the changes in education. Over 600 people attended, including leaders from the Ministry of Education, experts in the education constructor committee, officials in provincial education departments, deans of educational administration in universities, teachers' representatives, famous international MOOC experts and the bosses of teaching technology platforms. To push China's Higher Education with more fairness and better quality, all the delegates announced the Declaration of Action to Chinese MOOC. The other goals of the Declaration were to boost faster construction and more effective MOOC learning and orderly management. The Declaration pointed out that during the last six years, Chinese MOOC had developed from its weak state to a blossoming, giant and strong system. At present, there are 12,500 MOOCs courses. Over 2 billion people learn via MOOC. This total includes campus students and social learners. In fact, 65 million campus students earn credit from MOOC learning. Therefore, MOOC makes a great contribution to the construction of a learning society, a learning party, and a learning country. The future development goals of MOOC are to fully mobilize the teachers' participation, targeting famous teachers and elite universities in particular, to integrate the latest research results while improving the creativity and challenge of each course. [1]

As one of the open educational resources, MOOC has undergone great development in China. It is becoming increasingly popular in every subject and offers a new way of sharing educational resources. It has a profound influence on traditional teaching, especially during this year in which China suffered the outbreak of coronavirus leading to the suspension of physical classes. All varieties of schools quickly responded to the call of "non-stop learning while at home" and organized the teachers to have online teaching. Consequently, MOOC became many teachers' first choice. Therefore, due to the wide range of popularization and promotion, there will be significantly more teachers who want to join the MOOC teaching team and use their own MOOC to serve learners.

At present, MOOC research mainly focuses on the construction of one course from the macroscopic view and how the teachers transfer their roles during the rapid development, but rarely on the concrete process of how to produce a MOOC course. Therefore, this article takes

the MOOC of New Progressive College English Integrated Course as an example to introduce the specific procedures: preparation, video recording and maintenance, to offer some references to teachers beginning to produce their MOOC and contribute to English teaching development.

## **2. The Preparation for MOOC Production**

### **2.1. To Establish the Teaching Team and Set Up the Teaching Target**

Typically, MOOC focuses on a systematic course or a particular kind of textbook with a wealth of knowledge points, so it is completed by a teaching team rather than just one teacher. The different teaching styles of team members can overcome the monotony of only one teacher. I participated in the whole process of MOOC production as one of the teaching team members of New Progressive College English Integrated Course based on the textbook published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press. Fifteen teachers combined the textbook with our rich experiences of teaching college English. We used a specific task pattern designed to explain and summarize the learners' general existing problems effectively. We aimed to help the learners grasp the key points, master practical skills and improve their abilities for language comprehension and application. Therefore, we developed four specialized teaching groups based on teaching targets. There were groups for text explanation, vocabulary & grammar, translation, and writing. Each group had distinct tasks and cooperated with the other groups at the same time. The text explanation group's tasks were teaching reading skills, analyzing text structure, explaining the main idea to help the learners conquer reading obstacles and to reason logically throughout the reading process. The vocabulary & grammar group centered on methods to help the learners study words by linking the words within their actual context, applying the illustration and source tracing. As a result, this group instructed the learners to use grammar creatively and practically to reinforce their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar---the two basic aspects of English. To improve the learners' translation ability, the translation group discussed the different expressions in English and Chinese, comprehensively applying multiple methods to effectively address the difficulty in the translation of long sentences and compound sentences. The writing group struck a balance between analyzing an article's structure and making sentences. It integrated the concept of writing for different styles into the writing process. It aimed to reduce the learners' writing anxiety and upgrade their writing experiences. Therefore, the teaching target was to strengthen the learners' practical ability, creative thinking ability, and cross-culture communication ability in English. The MOOC goal was to improve the learners' English degree in listening, speaking, reading and writing through the pattern tasks' study to meet the demand for employment, studying abroad and international exchange. Teaching is always to be the key element in MOOC because it can determine the quality of MOOCs, so our teaching teams allowed us to address the needs of English language learners comprehensively.

### **2.2. To Write the Script for the Video**

After determining the teaching team and targets, the next step is to write the script based on a detailed analysis of the textbook. The most distinct difference between MOOC and classroom teaching is that MOOC is more concise. Only after an overall comprehension, can the teacher know how to adjust the length of teaching in each period. This suggests that for the teacher to give a full explanation on one point he or she should have a capacity to summarize and extract teaching content effectively. Take the translation group for example; its main task is to teach the translation exercise of the book (II-IV), including Chinese to English and English to Chinese. The paragraph translation of Chinese to English is the regular type of question in CET Band 4 & 6, so the teacher needs to take apart the exercises and refine the key points by using a relevant translation strategy. Besides that, the instructor needs to make the connection with the yearly

exam questions and teach the learners to draw inferences so that the learners can practically apply the strategy to similar translations.

The script is the presentation of a teaching plan, through which the teacher can control the teaching pace and make the teaching process clear. The script can be either the teacher's every single sentence, including the general discourse marker and conjunctions or an outline with personal interest and familiar style. It needs to pay attention to the coherence and transition between the context and the pause of the punctuation mark. The script should be neither too colloquial nor too bookish.

To reduce the teacher's extra revision in the editing stage, he or she should design how to integrate the script into a Powerpoint. Slide design should be included in the script, so then the teacher can assemble a Powerpoint corresponding with his/her teaching style and habit.

### **2.3. To Make A Powerpoint**

MOOC connects the teacher with the learners through technology, such as Powerpoint which plays a crucial role in conjunction with the script. For teachers proficient with Powerpoint, "the sense of viewer" is critical to consider. Since the majority of MOOC learners study using cell phones with relatively small screens, it is important to consider how to teach key points clearly while maintaining students' interest in the words and pictures. To solve these problems, the teacher could choose the obvious contrast between the words' color and the background of Powerpoint and enlarge the words' size. Teachers need not present the whole script on the Powerpoint for the learners' sake. The teacher should keep the learners' study consistent from the beginning to the end without any pauses due to the vagueness of Powerpoint.

## **3. The Video Recording Process of MOOC**

After the preparation of the script and Powerpoint, the video recording will be the next. At this point, the role of the teacher changes to that of an actor or video host. It is a huge and challenging task to teach in front of a camera instead of the students who offer more interaction, so how to "be yourself" is a tough problem. The teacher may imagine himself or herself to be a learner to predict what kind of teaching video is optimal. After thinking from another perspective, the teacher will understand how to react to the camera.

Usually, the technology company will link the script with a teleprompter, so the teacher can read the words with its up-down movement. No matter the language, the teacher should know that he is talking or narrating instead of "reading" the script word by word. The tone and the pace of the speaking should be appropriate, varied and calm. Furthermore, the motion of the teacher's sight should not be too obvious when he or she tries to follow the teleprompter, keeping eyes and head straight to the front. Meanwhile, the teacher needs to pay attention to his or her facial expression. Teaching in front of an indifferent camera can result in rapid speech or a monotonous tone. Therefore, the teacher adjusts to the medium by keeping a natural smile. It is better not to be too serious and strict before the camera. A serious topic can be taught in a light atmosphere; the key is facial expression. Concerning the facial expression, the teacher could practice with a mirror at home.

Besides the body language and facial expression, the teacher should select a proper outfit for the video. The video room has a different style of background so that the teacher could match his or her clothes with it or to reflect the content being taught. Color consistency and avoiding big patterns, stripes or formal clothes are practical suggestions.

Generally speaking, for a perfect effect the same content will likely be recorded multiple times. With each take, the teacher's state will be more flexible, improving the instruction.

#### 4. The Post-Production and Proofreading Stage

Following the video recording stage is a more complicated stage, namely, the post-production stage. In most cases, the technology company will do this part, but it still requires the teacher's full cooperation and participation. For the teacher's edition, the technology companies will present MOOC video in different ways, it could be a completed video with audio and video together or just audio. For example when the teacher gets an audio document he should listen to it while comparing it to the script, finding the differences, especially the meaningless words that were added unconsciously. If there is an obvious difference with the script, it should be recorded again. A teacher may choose just to re-record the wrong part being careful about inconsistency with the previous sentence or record the whole part.

Combining Powerpoint with audio and video is the most complicated part because there are so many tiny problems for the teacher to communicate with the technology company. For example within the subtitles the teacher needs to check the correct usage of each punctuation and capital letter. During the proofreading process, it is suggested that the team members check each other's work to be more objective and accurate.

From the preparation to the completion of the MOOC video, it will require countless revisions. Through the editing process, teachers make it better and better. When the video finally becomes an on-line course for learners, all the effort will pay off.

#### 5. The Maintenance Stage of MOOC

Although MOOC is conducted online, it still results in greater interaction between teachers and learners than traditional classroom teaching because "teaching is visible to the students, and the learning is visible to the teacher" [2]. Thus the teacher should respond to the learner's questions and thoughts promptly during the learning process. He or she should take advantage of the discussion area in the MOOC platform, to update the course further or address students' questions. "MOOC is an online learning course, but it is not only a course with systematic teaching targets, teaching videos, assignments and interactive discussions, it also emphasizes the teachers' online 'teaching' and the learners' online 'learning' as well as the communication between them, and most importantly is that MOOC realizes the perfect interaction among the teachers, the learners, the teaching content and the teaching media." [3]

#### 6. Conclusion

As can be seen, MOOC making is a huge project, from the careful preparation and design to the busy and nerve-wracking video recording stage, and then to the endless editing stage. Only after a series of stages can we present a completed MOOC course to the learners. Perhaps the length of each MOOC is no more than an hour, but every minute on the screen represents a large endeavor of teachers and technicians.

#### References

- [1] [http:// mooc.cn](http://mooc.cn)
- [2] Hattie,J. Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement [DB/OL]. Routledge,2008.
- [3] Jiang Yan, Ma Wulin : On the Misconceptions about the Construction of College English MOOCs (Foreign Language and Literature, China 2018), p.155-160.(In Chinese)