

# Exploration and practice of blended learning design in piano improvisation teaching in colleges and universities

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**Abstract:** Improvised Piano Accompaniment is a compulsory course for music majors, which combines music theory with performance practice. Based on the SPOC teaching platform in the school, centering on the teaching concept of “student-centered”, and through the practice of mixed courses, the author designed a blended learning mode that combines the three in one online and offline multiple teaching activities, and integrates individual learning and group learning. Through the design of diversified learning activities throughout the entire teaching process, students’ learning effects can be improved from multiple dimensions, so as to achieve high-level curriculum learning objectives.

**Keywords:** piano impromptu accompaniment; Blended learning; Flipped classroom; learning activities

In today’s rapidly developing information age, in the field of education, digital, networked and intelligent learning methods are gradually prevailing. In particular, a sudden epidemic, the comprehensive online teaching has promoted the development and expansion of information technology in the field of education. College teachers are fully exploring online teaching methods.

Blended Learning combines the advantages of online teaching and traditional teaching to form a “student-centered” and “online”+“offline” teaching mode. Through the organic combination of the two forms of teaching organization, learners’ learning can be gradually led to in-depth learning. blended learning is a small-scale private online course SPOC (Small Private Online Course) developed in the school, which is a personalized small group teaching. This concept was developed by Armando L Professor Armando Fox put forward 1 in 2013. Through the exploration and practice of blended learning, the author has effectively improved the depth and breadth of professional teaching while ensuring the teaching quality. The main course Piano Impromptu Accompaniment won the first batch of national online and

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offline mixed first-class courses, which has played a role in promoting the blended learning of higher music education courses.

## 1. Pain Points in Traditional Teaching

Piano impromptu accompaniment is a music professional course combining theory with practice. In traditional teaching, there are three dilemmas:

1.1 How to improve students' cognitive participation and interest, and stimulate students' autonomous learning ability.

For the students of "improvisation accompaniment", they need not only to master the fundamentals of music theory and harmony theory, but also to have good music hearing and piano playing skills. In the learning process, the improvement of this skill must internalize and consolidate the knowledge learned in the classroom through a large number of practical exercises. Therefore, how to stimulate students' interest in learning and improve their participation in learning is the key to improve students' piano improvisation skills.

1.2 How to improve the utilization rate of music class, so that the process learning materials can be saved and viewed retrospectively.

There are two major problems in the traditional piano improvisation accompaniment teaching: First, the examination and grading of ordinary assignments are performed live in the form of one-to-one in the classroom, with high time cost and low efficiency. 2. As music is the art of time, it is difficult to save homework performance materials, teachers and students can't check after class, and students can't compare their progress.

1.3 How to improve the depth and breadth of learning and achieve high-level learning goals.

The scope of the traditional piano improvisation accompaniment teaching is relatively narrow. One player plays one piano in a single form.

Students pay attention to skill training, and lack of analysis of works, accumulation of theories, and research on techniques, which limits their comprehensive ability and quality.

Through the hybrid teaching design, it aims to use the Internet+multimedia technology to carry out rich teaching activities, and promote cooperation, communication and reflection through project-based learning between groups, so as to enhance their musical imagination and creative thinking of music.

## 2. The standardized construction of course websites and the enrichment of teaching resources are the core elements of hybrid teaching.

The course website is a portal for teachers to explain the overall design of the course to students, provide teaching resources, and for students to understand the learning content of the course and receive learning guidance. It is an important link to ensure students' online learning. This course uses the "Blackboard" platform as the SPOC teaching website on campus.

2.1 The website should have clear and definite basic teaching information.

First, the course website should clearly explain to students how to start the course. At the beginning of the course, teachers should provide an overview of the course, introduce the schedule of teaching activities, guide students to explore the course website, and list detailed navigation instructions of the course, so that students can be familiar with the functions and modules used in each learning stage.

Second, the website should have a clear curriculum introduction, curriculum outline, learning content and requirements, and assessment methods. Teachers must provide detailed information of the course to help students understand the nature of the course, teaching progress, learning objectives, learning process and assessment methods.

Third, teachers should clearly explain to students the basic conditions of knowledge, skills and technology necessary for learning this course, as well as the rules that must be followed. It is convenient for students to evaluate their own level so as to make up for the lack of knowledge.

In addition, blended learning is different from traditional teaching. Students spend a large part of their time in autonomous learning on the network platform, and teachers must provide support for learning. Therefore, we need to provide teachers' basic information on the website, such as e-mail, telephone number, WeChat, etc., as well as the time to inform teachers, answer questions, and give feedback on homework guidance and results, so that students can manage their learning activities more actively.

2.2 The classified construction of learning resources can play a complementary role.

First of all, the curriculum should provide a variety of resources, such as materials and handouts created by teachers, courseware, teaching videos, audio, exercises, etc. The teaching resources provided for this course on the website include text learning materials, teaching courseware, micro lesson video, playing audio, teaching auxiliary video, music score sharing, software sharing, etc. There are also special areas for course announcement, course assignments, group learning, communication and interaction, forum discussion, etc.

Second, all kinds of teaching resources are sufficient and can play a complementary role. For example, in the piano impromptu accompaniment course, teachers put concepts and content that can be clearly expressed in words in the learning materials and teaching courseware, while the teaching video focuses on the analysis, performance and application of teaching content that cannot be expressed in words.

Third, teaching videos should be short and concise. Each video should focus on a specific teaching content, and the length should be controlled within the time range that students can focus on, which is consistent with the characteristics of students' physical and mental

development. The author shot a full set of teaching videos for this course in order to carry out blended learning. The students can clearly see the movement and fingering of the fingers on the keyboard by shooting down the head. In this way, students' online learning will feel immersive in the classroom, and at the same time, students will get a good sense of online learning experience while narrowing the distance between teachers and students.

2.3 Learning resources cover the whole teaching process and help students achieve the established learning goals.

First of all, the learning resources provided by the website can cover the whole teaching process. For example, the weekly learning content and requirements are published in the course announcement. Literal materials, teaching courseware and teaching videos are the main contents of students' self-study before class; Teaching videos and course assignments provide guarantee for exercises and practical exercises after class; The sharing of music scores and software resources will help students expand their learning and use information technology; The special area for communication and interaction and forum discussion provides the soil for post class Q&A, student student interaction, and teacher-student communication.

Second, learning resources should be related to learning objectives to support the achievement of learning objectives. Teachers should update learning content and resources in a timely manner, integrate cutting-edge research results into teaching content, and present them in platform materials.

Third, learning resources are modular, clear navigation, easy to find, and highly readable. All learning resources are organized in an orderly manner and cannot be simply stacked. The path to obtain resources must have internal teaching logic, such as by chapter, by week, by type, etc. The focus of learning resources is prominent, which does not distract students' attention and is convenient for students to read and browse.

### 3. A mixed curriculum teaching model based on flipped classroom

Flipped Classroom means to readjust the time in and out of the classroom, focus on students, and transfer the initiative and decision-making power of learning from teachers to students, so as to realize the student-centered and teacher led learning mode 2. In this teaching mode, teachers no longer occupy classroom time to teach basic information, but through students to complete knowledge learning independently before class. With the precious time in the face-to-face classroom, students can focus more on active project-based learning through the guidance of teachers, so as to gain a deeper understanding. In this way, learning is more flexible and active, and students' participation is stronger.

As a compulsory course for music majors in colleges and universities, Improvised Piano Accompaniment is a combination of theory and practice. Through the exploration and practice of hybrid teaching, it reconstructs the traditional teaching methods and learning processes, designs and develops a "student-centered" independent study before class, flipping in class, practice after class, reflection and innovation, and integrates the trinity of multiple learning activities. The online and offline hybrid teaching mode in which individual learning and group learning permeate each other.

3.1 Before class: students learn independently. Teachers and students meet in different time and space.

The "pre class" part actually moves forward the content taught by traditional classroom teachers through the curriculum resources on the platform. Students can learn from the text materials, courseware, videos and other resources provided by teachers on the platform, and they can feel immersive in the classroom. While narrowing the distance between teachers and students, we also get a good sense of online learning experience. In this way, students can enter the "class" again with a better foundation, so as to effectively improve the teaching quality.

3.2 In class: Flip the classroom. Teachers and students meet in the same time and space.

The "in class" flipped classroom is not a copy of the traditional classroom, but a more in-depth teaching activity based on the pre class learning results. Teachers organize students to consolidate, absorb and internalize the knowledge learned online through carefully designed classroom teaching activities, and can further flexibly use it. "In class" is the main body of teaching. In face-to-face classroom, we can use pure offline classroom teaching, or we can use online and offline hybrid 3.

In the face-to-face classroom, the course of Piano Impromptu Accompaniment will introduce common problems of homework, answer questions and solve questions, show students, comment by teachers, and discuss with teachers and students. Students can also test the effect of autonomous learning on the front line of class through classroom tests and classroom questions. After that, according to the students' answers, the difficulties and key points were analyzed in time. Through online demonstration performance, the teacher further explained how the theoretical knowledge of harmony could be transformed into practical improvisation ability. In the class, we can also report and share group learning projects, perform group works in cooperation with multiple voices, and discuss and exchange students' self-evaluation and mutual evaluation. Finally, teachers summarize and assign learning tasks.

3.3 After class: practice, reflection and innovation. Teachers and students collide in different time and space through multiple learning activities.

The "after class" part of online and offline hybrid teaching is also a very important teaching link. The diversity of online and offline learning activities after class is an important process for students to transform the knowledge they learned before and in class into practical ability. Through these diversified learning activities, teachers can also timely understand the students' ideological trends, effectively guide them, and help to analyze the learning situation.

The “after class” personal performance practice of the piano impromptu accompaniment course is an important process for students to transform their music theory and harmony knowledge into practical performance skills. According to the course assignment requirements issued by the teachers on the platform of the Great Summer School, students first practice offline, and then submit online performance videos. The teachers review and guide online, and give comments and suggestions. After submitting, students can consult teachers’ feedback online, and then make offline improvements and improvements.

After class, group learning is conducted through blog, post, forum, discussion and other forms of group communication and interaction.

Interaction can guide students to learn and think actively and achieve high-level learning goals. In the group discussion after class, when the students’ discussion direction is scattered and the key points are unclear, the teachers will timely participate in and guide the students to think about the key and difficult problems. The purpose of interaction is to stimulate students’ active learning and independent thinking to achieve high-level learning objectives, such as analysis, evaluation, design, creation, etc.

The course of Piano Improvisation Accompaniment permeates each other with two different learning modes, individual and group, and forms a closed loop before, during and after the whole lesson.

It can be seen that the core value of the blended learning design before, during and after class based on the flipped classroom is to expand the time and space for “teaching” and “learning”. From the six categories of Bloom’s educational goal cognition: memory, understanding, application, analysis, evaluation and creation, the mixed curriculum design realizes the primary cognition of basic knowledge memory and understanding “before class”; “In class” is an important link. Through the internalization and application of knowledge, students can realize and lead from primary cognition to advanced cognition; “After class” consolidates and realizes advanced cognition of analysis, evaluation and creation through diversified learning activities.

#### 4. Teaching reflection:

##### 4.1 Online and offline diversified activities promote communication.

In the teaching process, both online and offline activities should be two-way between teachers and students. If only students are learning tasks and teachers do not track or understand them in time, students will gradually lose their learning initiative. Every action taken by teachers will produce a series of reactions and have an impact on students. Both online and offline activities, processes and results need to be evaluated. Diversified teaching activities can effectively enhance the communication and interaction between teachers and students and between students, improve the interest of learning, and enhance the effect of learning.

##### 4.2 The complete process evaluation will improve the power.

Whether online or offline, processes or results need to be evaluated. Teachers should timely give students evaluation, guidance and feedback on learning, and carry out evaluation. Through these process evaluations, “teaching” and “learning” will be more clear, and learning will be more targeted. At the same time, it will also play a role in driving and encouraging students to learn. Teachers should track students’ online and offline learning progress and master students’ learning situation. When finding that students encounter difficulties, they should timely carry out learning intervention to guide students to preset learning results, so that students can maintain their enthusiasm, confidence and sense of gain in learning.

##### 4.3 The course of aesthetic education helps people grow in ideology and politics.

As the fundamental task of education, “establishing morality and cultivating people” is the mission and responsibility of college teachers. In the music class, we use excellent music works as the carrier to broaden students’ discipline quality and cultivate their correct music values, outlook on life and world outlook. Under the epidemic situation, students share classic music works through the course platform, use modern information technology to make music videos, use multimedia technology to arrange music and other different learning methods, and teachers and students use blogs Post and other forms of communication. In the course, students not only learned music professional knowledge, but also deeply felt the power of music! They have learned the spirit of fearing life and nature, bearing the responsibility of giving, fearing difficulties and persevering. To achieve the teaching goal of educating people with aesthetics silently.

Blended learning has broad prospects in the field of music education in colleges and universities. Teaching reform is always on the way. Teachers need to be more caring, more attentive, innovative, and constantly explore and practice! I hope that the application of information technology in music teaching is not only the first ray of light to solve the problem of higher music education under the epidemic situation, but also the bright road to realize and promote the reform of music teaching in colleges and universities!

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