


# Chapter 12


## The Design, Development, and Evaluation of the Task– Based Small Private Online Course (SPOC) for Learning English for Occupational Purposes

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## ABSTRACT

*MOOCs are found to be limited in improving learner performance and perceived motivation, especially in English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). This study designed, developed, and evaluated a Task-Based Small Private Online Course (TB-SPOC) for EOP in Chinese Higher Vocational Colleges (HVCs). Guided by Task-Based Instruction, Self-Determination Theory, and the ADDIE model, the TB-SPOC emphasized real-world communicative tasks aligned with national standards. A quasi-experimental design involved 360 first-year HVC students from high school and vocational school backgrounds, who were randomly assigned to either a TB-SPOC or Content-Based SPOC group. Performance was assessed through pre- and post-tests on discourse competence, and perceived motivation was measured using an adapted Instructional Material Motivational Survey. The study provides empirical evidence for the effectiveness of TB-SPOCs in enhancing learning performance and perceived motivation, offering insights for improving vocational English instruction through innovative online models.*

## INTRODUCTION

The global evolution of digital education has fundamentally altered the pedagogical landscape of English language instruction (Javed, 2024). Triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and sustained by continued technological advancement, this transformation has made online and blended learning an integral part of higher education worldwide (Ali, 2020; Abdullah et al., 2020). Traditional classroom instruction is increasingly complemented or replaced by digital alternatives that offer greater flexibility, scalability, and accessibility. These changes have led to new demands for educational models that are responsive to the diverse needs of learners and aligned with the practical realities of the twenty-first-century workplace.

In this context, English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) has gained heightened importance, particularly in vocational education where communicative competence in real-world settings is crucial (Zeng & Della, 2024). The imperative to teach job-specific English in a way that is contextually relevant and pedagogically sound has spurred a wave of innovation in instructional delivery. While Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) initially held promise for expanding access to language education, they have proven insufficient in practice due to their impersonal structure, limited interactivity, and high dropout rates (Feng & Liu, 2022; Li, 2022). These limitations are especially pronounced in EOP, where learners benefit most from structured, task-oriented instruction that simulates real-world communication.

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