

Teaching Practice and Exploration of Outcome-Based Education General Courses of Business Administration

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Abstract: *Based on the constructivism theory, this paper explores the teaching reform practice of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) general course in business administration. By analyzing the existing problems in current business administration teaching, taking the course of "Public Relations and Social Etiquette" as an example, this paper proposes to take the OBE concept as the guide, based on constructivist theory, and further strengthen students' active construction ability and practical application ability through fully leveraging the advantages of coordinating knowledge, action, and intention in general management courses, cultivating a team of double-qualified teachers, improving the evaluation system and feedback mechanism, and exploring personalized needs according to individual needs. This will enhance the teaching effectiveness of course outcomes and cultivate high-quality business management talents that can adapt to market demand.*

Keywords: *OBE, Constructivism, General Management Courses, Intrinsic Driving Forces*

1. Introduction

General courses in business administration are an important component of professional education in business administration. At present, there is a wide range of general courses in business administration in China. Following the principle of broad caliber and solid foundation, many courses belong to platform courses, mainly offered in the first two years of undergraduate studies. They aim to provide students with a broad knowledge base, cultivate their comprehensive literacy and interdisciplinary abilities. It can be said that the teaching quality of general courses in business administration directly affects students' employment competitiveness and long-term development. However, there are generally problems in the teaching of general courses in business administration in China, such as emphasizing theory over practice, and insufficient student initiative. The results oriented teaching model emphasizes the cultivation of applied talents, while the constructivist theory emphasizes the initiative and constructiveness of learners in the process of knowledge acquisition. These provide new exploration perspectives and ideas for the teaching reform of general courses in business administration.

2. Analysis of the Current Situation of General Business Administration Courses

2.1. Course design is disconnected from practical application

General courses in business administration are mainly divided into two types: compulsory and elective. These courses can provide students with a broad knowledge base and comprehensive literacy cultivation, which is conducive to improving their interdisciplinary learning ability. This lays a solid foundation for students to choose majors they are interested in, design future career development and life plans in their third year of college. However, some courses have prominent issues such as repetitive content and a disconnect between theory and practice. The teaching content often focuses on imparting theoretical knowledge, lacking the cultivation of students' practical and innovative abilities. Courses such as "Public Relations" and "Management Communication" often place too much emphasis on the imparting of basic knowledge and neglect the integration with practical management. The courses fail to fully demonstrate their practical characteristics as general courses, leading students to feel that there is little difference between learning and not, and it is difficult to apply the theories they have learned to practice.

2.2. The monotony and dullness of teaching forms

The traditional teaching methods for general education courses are mainly based on lectures. Although some universities have begun to try teaching methods such as case-based teaching and simulated training, due to the lack of double-qualified teachers, teachers themselves lack practical experience. Classroom teaching cases are mostly from books, which are outdated and have a slow update speed. Practical training often lacks substantial breakthroughs due to differences in teachers' understanding. The self talking classroom atmosphere is difficult to stimulate and meet students' learning needs, and the teaching format of "old wine in a new bottle" is difficult to stimulate students' intrinsic learning interest and guide them to think deeply.

2.3. Single evaluation system and feedback mechanism

At present, the main assessment methods for general education courses are closed book exams or course papers, which lack process assessment and make it difficult to comprehensively evaluate students' comprehensive qualities and practical application abilities. At the same time, many feedback mechanisms for teacher-student interaction are virtually non-existent, making it difficult for students to timely understand their learning situation and existing problems.

2.4. Lack of student initiative in learning

Most undergraduate students in universities today were born after 2000, and they are also a generation that grew up with electronic products. Their dependence on the online world has gradually become significant. The traditional teaching mode itself lacks appeal to them, and coupled with the fact that business management courses are often different from science and engineering courses, they can be basically understood through self-study. Therefore, the phenomenon of "bowing down" in close contact with mobile phones in the classroom is commonplace, and students are unwilling to participate in classroom teaching activities and lack the motivation to actively explore and construct knowledge. The lack of endogenous motivation not only affects students' learning outcomes, but also inhibits their development of innovative thinking and problem-solving abilities.

3. Related theoretical foundations

3.1. Outcome-Based Education philosophy

The Outcome-Based Education philosophy, also known as outcome oriented education, goal oriented education, or demand-oriented education, is an educational model that is guided by students' learning outcomes. Outcome-Based Education, abbreviated as OBE in English, is widely recognized as a correct direction for pursuing educational excellence and a valuable educational reform concept for reference.^[1]

Its core philosophy mainly consists of two points: firstly, putting students at the center, paying attention to their individual differences and personalized needs, and striving to achieve their comprehensive development. The second is outcome-based, where students achieve practical results and abilities through the learning process, rather than traditional teaching methods or exam scores.

The OBE philosophy emphasizes that curriculum design and teaching should fully consider the individual differences of each student, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to prove what they have learned and achieve learning outcomes by providing flexible learning opportunities and presentation platforms. At the same time, teachers should start with the ultimate goal (the final learning outcome) and design courses in reverse to ensure that teaching activities are closely related to the ultimate goal. By evaluating students' abilities and performance, they can measure their learning outcomes and focus on whether they have truly mastered the knowledge and skills they have learned and can apply them to solve problems in real life.

The Outcom- Based Education (OBE) model focuses on improving the pertinence and effectiveness of teaching. Emphasize the focus on students' learning outcomes and clearly define specific standards for knowledge, skills, abilities, and qualities that students should achieve after completing their studies. This teaching model emphasizes the flexibility and personalization of the teaching process, aiming to help students achieve predetermined learning outcomes through diversified teaching methods and means.

3.2. Overview of Constructivist Theory

Constructivism was first proposed by Swiss psychologist J. Piaget. Constructivist theory is an important branch of cognitive psychology, which includes four attributes: context, collaboration, conversation, and meaning construction. ^[2]Constructivism believes that learning is a process in which learners actively construct knowledge. Emphasize the richness and diversity of student experience. It also believes that learning is not just about receiving and memorizing information, but more importantly, understanding and applying information to form one's own insights and problem-solving abilities. This process usually involves two basic processes: "assimilation" and "adaptation", where learners integrate new information with their existing cognitive structures (assimilation), or restructure and transform their cognitive structures when their existing cognitive structures cannot assimilate new information (adaptation), and internalize it as their own construction of meaning for knowledge.^[2]

Constructivism emphasizes the initiative and constructiveness of learners in the process of knowledge acquisition, and constructivist teaching theory emphasizes reconstruction and innovation, which is a transformation from traditional intuitive teaching to active teaching and student-centered active construction of learning. By consulting China National Knowledge Infrastructure, it can be found that research on constructivist teaching concepts and their applications in China has always been a hot topic in research papers. As of the end of July 2024, with "constructivism" as the keyword, more than 42000 papers have been published. Among them, scholar He Kekang from Beijing Normal University has made the most significant contribution to the research and promotion of constructivist theory in teaching forms and models in China. However, there are relatively few studies on how to refine the theory of constructivism into specific types of courses, especially in exploring the application of constructivist theory in general business management courses, which runs through the entire process. Outcome-based education reform papers are currently rare. Therefore, this study has positive theoretical and practical significance in exploring the application of constructivist theory and OBE concept in general courses of business administration.

4. Basic Principles of Outcome-Based Education Practice for General Business Administration Courses

4.1. Clarify learning outcomes and goals

In the course design phase, the learning outcomes and objectives of each course should be clearly defined. These goals should be specific, measurable, easy to implement, and closely related to students' future career development.

4.2. Optimize teaching content and structure

We should optimize the teaching content and structure according to the learning results and objectives. On the one hand, we need to integrate repeated course contents to avoid waste of resources. On the other hand, we need to increase practical teaching links. For example, case analysis should keep pace with the times.^[3]Combined with the course content, we will arrange simulation training, enterprise visits, etc., so that students can understand the theoretical knowledge and apply the theory to practice.

4.3. Innovative teaching methods and tools

We should adopt diversified teaching methods and means to improve students' learning interest and participation. For example, teaching models such as flipped classroom and blended learning can be adopted, allowing students to independently learn theoretical knowledge before class, and interactive activities such as group discussions and case analysis can be conducted during class. At the same time, modern information technology tools such as online learning platforms and virtual simulation software can be utilized to provide students with richer learning resources and experiences.

4.4. Establish an evaluation system for the entire process

We should establish a diversified, three-dimensional and whole process evaluation system, and pay attention to the evaluation of students' comprehensive quality and practical ability. Through multiple dimensions such as classroom performance, homework completion, and practical project outcomes, students are evaluated based on a combination of formative assessment and formative assessment.

4.5. Establish an effective feedback mechanism

Effective communication channels should be established between teachers and students. For example, we can timely feed back the evaluation results and existing problems to students through wechat, QQ or regular Q&A to help them improve their learning methods and improve their learning effect.

5. Specific practical cases and effect analysis

"Public Relations and Social Etiquette" is a fundamental course for undergraduate students majoring in Business Administration. Through this course, students will master the basic principles and practical skills of public relations and social skills, cultivate their awareness of public relations and communication, and comprehensively improve their interpersonal communication abilities. This course focuses on the cultivation of practical abilities, particularly emphasizing the cultivation of brand image, awareness of maintaining personal and organizational image, and the development of crisis public relations skills. In order to better achieve the teaching goal of cultivating high-level applied talents, the teaching team fully adheres to the outcome-based education philosophy and uses constructivism to design the teaching of this general education course. The following will elaborate on the key points of teaching practice in teaching.

5.1. Clarify the training objectives of the course

(1) We should cultivate students to master the basic knowledge and theory of public relations, so that they can use public relations knowledge to solve practical problems in their work, and can communicate in a cross-cultural context.

(2) We should cultivate students to become practitioners who know, observe and use etiquette, so that they can apply public relations knowledge and etiquette skills in social occasions.

(3) We should cultivate students' good interpersonal relationship and team spirit to improve their communication and coordination ability in actual communication.

5.2. Optimize and integrate teaching content

This course is an overview of how people can establish a good image, improve organizational and personal visibility and reputation, create a good interpersonal and organizational environment, and establish trust and cooperation mechanisms in social communication. It is a course that integrates the basic principles and etiquette skills of public relations and social etiquette. The content is divided into two parts. The first part mainly introduces the principles and applications of public relations, with a focus on enabling students to master the skills and methods of public relations. At the beginning of this part, we will organize students to collect public relations cases and have a preliminary understanding of public relations. After that, we will arrange students to organize a special public relations activity (16 class hours in total) in groups using the principle of public relations planning, and write the activity report. The second part mainly introduces the theory and training of social etiquette, and some courses mainly arrange etiquette in class tests and training (a total of 16 hours).

5.3. Adopting diverse teaching methods and tools

As a highly applied general course, "Public Relations and Social Etiquette" is difficult for students to understand and master its practical application skills without personally participating in practice and training. Therefore, the teaching design of this lesson fully considers the creation of scenarios to stimulate students' interest in learning and desire for exploration. The organic combination of classroom discussions, scenario simulation training, activity planning training, and theoretical explanations can be conducted in the form of voluntary team groups; Highlight the cultivation of teamwork ability and spirit of cooperation. Through teamwork and group collaboration, we collect and analyze learning materials, plan special topics, simulate scenarios, and evaluate assessments, in order to better construct public relations theory and practical knowledge. Therefore, in the teaching process, the curriculum strictly follows the requirements of the training plan and teaching outline to design course content and classroom teaching activities.

The group final assignments for the course can take on various forms. It can be a group based activity planning of "getting to know you, it's great", or a group based self introduction, calling or holding up

signs to endorse oneself in one's hometown. Combining the characteristics of college students' love for the internet, it can be presented in the form of PPT and video, reflecting contemporary college students' sunny confidence and cultural confidence in public relations activity planning. It should be noted that teachers should help understand the purpose and requirements of activity planning, the rules of public relations activity planning, and the inherent connections between implementation in advance, in order to construct a cognitive structure about public relations themed activities.

5.4. Established a process based evaluation and feedback mechanism

"Public Relations and Social Etiquette" is a school level non-standard answer assessment pilot course. As a test course, the grade composition mainly consists of two parts: final assessment, accounting for 40%, with team groups as the main focus and special activity planning; Regular assessment accounts for 60%. Including two parts:

(1) In class testing accounts for 40% (including speeches, simulation training, case discussions; software tests such as Rain Classroom and Learning Pass);

(2) Personal attendance and classroom performance account for 20% (including classroom activity, frequency of actively answering questions, attendance rate, etc.). Special activity reports, classroom speeches, etc. can invite 5-7 students to form a judge to participate in evaluating the content of the activity and commenting on the planning and presentation of the special topic and the effectiveness of the speech. Through teacher-student interaction and peer evaluation, students give scores to a group, and the final evaluation score is linked to the group score and individual score.

After 16 rounds of repeated improvement and practice, the outcome-based education model has received good feedback in the application of general courses in business management. From the perspective of practical effects, students' learning enthusiasm, classroom participation, proactive communication with teachers, seeking social hot topics, and writing small papers have significantly increased, and their analytical ability to connect theory with practice has also been significantly improved. This course has been rated as a provincial-level offline course. The diverse teaching methods and means have stimulated students' interest in learning, and students can actively participate in the teaching process. The comprehensive evaluation and a large number of practical activities have enabled students to apply theoretical knowledge to practice, cultivating their practical and innovative abilities. This has also been fully reflected in the appropriate application of students' speech and behavior in later job applications.

6. The future reform direction of results oriented teaching practice in general courses of business administration

Teaching reform is a process of continuous improvement in the integration of curriculum and teaching systems, and the exploration of outcome-based education models in general courses of business administration is just beginning. Moreover, due to the differences in disciplines, there are still many issues that need to be explored in depth for general education courses, especially in the following areas, which need to be continuously improved and expanded:

6.1. Fully leverage the advantages of knowledge action collaboration in general courses of business administration

General courses in business administration are different from courses in science and engineering in that they focus more on the natural and subtle improvement of quality and ability. The biggest advantage of constructivist teaching currently lies in students' proficiency in filming videos and software, especially their high interest in participating in production and showcasing themselves on camera. Based on constructivist theory, a three-dimensional online and offline teaching model can be established that better combines situational teaching, team collaboration, conference presentations, and meaning construction to encourage students to understand and master the knowledge system in the actual construction of teaching situations, and to experience the inherent meaning of general education courses based on their own experience and cognition.^[4] Therefore, as a general course in economics and management, it is usually a platform course set up along with different majors in economics and management. It is best to accumulate more than two rounds of courses as a foundation for teaching practice exploration in order to be more solid.

6.2. Strengthen the construction of double-qualified teaching staff

Teachers are the main body of teaching reform, and their teaching philosophy and methods directly affect teaching effectiveness. Therefore, on the one hand, we need to strengthen the training and support for teachers. On the other hand, we need to introduce more double-qualified teachers to enhance the professional competence and teaching ability of the main lecturers of business management courses, so that they can better adapt to the results oriented teaching mode.

Meanwhile, school enterprise cooperation is also an important way to strengthen the construction of double-qualified teaching staff and enhance students' practical abilities. By establishing close cooperative relationships with enterprises and hiring enterprise mentors, the practical guidance ability and professional ethics of teachers can be enhanced. Moreover, it can provide students with more practical opportunities and job internships, enabling them to better understand the correlation between theory, business operations, and market dynamics in practice, and improve the evaluation system and feedback mechanism.

6.3. Strengthen the construction of evaluation system and feedback mechanism

A comprehensive evaluation system and feedback mechanism are important components of outcome-based education models. In practice, the operability of the evaluation system and feedback mechanism should be further improved to ensure that students can receive fair evaluations, effective learning feedback, and guidance in a timely manner.

In terms of evaluation methods, explore more diverse and comprehensive assessment methods to evaluate performance. Such as the combination of paper exams and regular grades. The main scoring points for daily grades are group classroom scenario plays and PPT speech analysis, which cultivate students' innovative consciousness and teamwork spirit, actively explore the blended teaching reform of online and offline flipped classroom mode to promote the teaching reform of general courses in business administration^[5]. The entire teaching process is fully integrated with the fundamental goal of cultivating curriculum abilities, guided by problems and results, and actively carries out reforms in educational and teaching methods under the constructivist model.

6.4. Emphasize individualized teaching and personalized instruction

The classroom teaching process is the main field for business administration students to reconstruct their knowledge, abilities, and qualities. Teachers adopt differentiated teaching models and diverse teaching activities in order to fully achieve the goal of constructing students' knowledge, abilities, and qualities in the teaching process. Therefore, in course practice, it is necessary to gradually explore the operability of a results oriented teaching model.

Both are general courses, but each course has its own characteristics. Therefore, the reform mode and methods of each course should be flexibly applied in teaching. Especially in the era of digital economy, in the outcome-based education model, the role of the internet should be more fully utilized. Blended online and offline teaching should focus on the organic combination of differentiation and personalized teaching, and develop personalized teaching plans and programs based on course characteristics, students' actual situations, and learning needs to better meet the learning needs of different subjects and improve teaching effectiveness.

7. Conclusion

Therefore, the application of outcome-based education mode in general courses of business administration has broad prospects and profound significance. We should continue to conduct in-depth research and exploration on the specific implementation methods and strategies of this teaching model, and carry out bolder and richer teaching reform practices to cultivate more high-quality, innovative and practical talents in business management.

Acknowledgement

Research on the Reform of Undergraduate Teaching in Liaoning Province's General Higher Education, Construction and Sharing of High Quality Teaching Resources Project: Cross school Credit

Teaching Practice and Exploration of the Course "Organizational Behavior"; The phased research results of the Liaoning Province Graduate Education Reform Project: "Exploration and Practice of Integrated Teaching Reform of Core Curriculum Group for Business Administration Graduate Students under OBE Concept" (LNYJG2022084) and the Teaching Reform Project of Shenyang Aerospace University : "Teaching Practice and Exploration of Constructivist Model for General Business Administration Courses from the Perspective of Curriculum Ideology and Politics" (JG240801B1).

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