

Research on OBE-Based English Teaching in Higher Vocational Colleges----Taking International Cruise Ship Management as an Example

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Abstract: *Outcome-based Education (OBE) is an important way to cultivate technical and skilled talents in higher vocational colleges. This paper first discusses connotation of OBE, analyzes problems of English teaching in higher vocational colleges: disconnection between basic English and workplace English skills, old-style teaching methods and improper teaching concepts. Then, it introduces reform objectives of OBE English teaching reform in Jiangsu Maritime Institute. Finally, taking international cruise ship management as an example, it elaborates on practice of OBE English teaching from the perspectives of teaching objectives, curriculum, teaching methods, teaching management and teaching evaluation.*

Keywords: *OBE; English Teaching; International Cruise Ship Management; Reform in Education*

1. Introduction

With the progress of global economic integration and cooperation, English plays an important role in international economy, trade and cultural exchanges. Graduates of higher vocational colleges are the main work force of economic development. Thus, their English competency has become one of the essential comprehensive qualities, especially their abilities to communicate in English at workplaces. As a compulsory course in higher vocational colleges in China, English has always been placed in an important position. In spite of this, due to various kinds of reasons, teaching effect is not satisfactory and reforms have been implemented in many colleges. Outcome-based Education(OBE) has caught our attention because of its emphasis on workplace skills. When it comes to English teaching, teachers should be familiar with workplace English and design teaching content to teach students essential English skills. This paper will explore how OBE has been used in English teaching in international cruise ship management major.

2. Connotation of OBE

OBE first appeared in the United States in the 1980s. It focuses on students' learning objectives, including what learning objectives are, how to define them, how to help students achieve them, and how to assess students' them. Here, learning objectives means the actual skills students have to master to meet relevant requirements of different positions at workplaces. So, the most important thing is to figure out what skills are needed at real workplaces.

OBE attaches great importance to effectiveness and output of educational institutions and evaluates effectiveness of teaching by analyzing substantive successful experience that students can achieve in their future career, rather than limited to teaching itself. Under OBE educational concept, classroom teaching should be effectively designed around students' career development skill indicators in the next 3-5 years after graduation to ensure that students' learning content and practice they do during school can really help them accumulate work skills for future employment and entrepreneurship^[1].

OBE's teaching philosophy is to place students in the central position, design teaching contents according to basis of students, and study what students can learn, how to learn and why to learn. In the curriculum design stage, teachers should focus on these three issues for teaching design, textbook selection, task design and assessment design to ensure that all phases focus on curriculum objectives to achieve cultivation of students' ability^[2].

OBE was put forward and practiced under the background of new industrial revolution at the end of

the 20th century. Its promotion began with the Washington protocol system established by American Engineering Education Certification Association. China became a signatory member of Washington Agreement in 2013. Domestic research and application of OBE mostly focus on the reform of engineering education, and there is relatively little practice in English teaching.

3. The status quo of English teaching in higher vocational colleges

3.1 Disconnection between basic English and workplace English skills

For many higher vocational colleges, there is a disconnection between basic English and workplace English skills. English teaching still focuses on cultivating students' listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation ability of daily English. Different majors learn the same teaching content and their workplace English is "not targeted" or weakened, which leads to the phenomenon that students lack interests in English learning as they find what they learn is not closely related to what they are going to use after graduation.

According to the *College English Curriculum Standard for Higher Vocational Education* issued in 2021, English in higher vocational colleges should include basic module and expansion module, and expansion module includes vocational English, academic English and literacy improvement English. It is evident that English should include basic English and professional English, and educational administration department in higher vocational colleges should be in charge of integrated design.

3.2 Old-style teaching method

At present, English teaching in higher vocational colleges is still dominated by classroom teaching, which usually lacks variety and not conducive to students' development of career skills. Teaching still follow traditional English teaching methods, focusing on teachers' explanation, and fail to take into account students' learning habits, cognitive characteristics and learning basis. Except for using PPT, the use of modern information technology is not sufficient, and there is still much room for improvement in teaching methods. One important factor has not been given proper attention: real workplace scenario. Most graduates of higher vocational colleges will enter the work force of different industries and hands-on experience is essential and they should be exposed to real workplace scenario as much as possible. However, English teaching in most higher vocational colleges are far from this requirement.

3.3 Improper teaching concept

Teaching concept is very important and it serves as a guide and tells teachers how to design their teaching, what to teach and how to evaluate students' performance. The talent cultivation objectives of higher vocational colleges are different from those of universities. Therefore, teaching concept should not be the same as well. However, most English teachers graduate from universities and they receive university education and when they become teachers, they will teach the way they acquire knowledge, which is not right.

4. OBE-based English teaching in higher vocational colleges

4.1 Overall ideas

Since 2019, Jiangsu Maritime Institute has implemented OBE teaching reform in an all-round way. It has promulgated the *Implementation Plan of OBE Teaching Reform of English*. Guided by Xi Jinping's socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics. The plan focuses on the fundamental task of moral education, takes into account of basic principles of English teaching and implements the *College English Curriculum Standard for Higher Vocational Education(2021)*. The purpose of the plan is to promotes OBE teaching reform of the school and helps to cultivate international compound technical and skilled talents. It introduces OBE teaching concept, takes project as the carrier, takes output as the driver, highlights cultivation of English listening and speaking ability, truly integrate ideological-political education to build a comprehensive educational concept of constructing educational pattern of "by all staff through the whole process and in all the courses".

The implementation plan focuses on basic knowledge of English as well as professional English. It innovates mixed teaching mode and methods via advocating "learning by doing and doing while

learning", which aims at improving students' core qualities such as foreign-related communication in workplaces, multicultural communication, language thinking and autonomous learning, guiding students to broaden their international vision, strengthen their cultural self-confidence, and cultivate their patriotism and national pride.

4.2 Reform objectives

4.2.1 Constructing ideological-political education in English curriculum

Building morality and cultivating people is a historical mission that higher vocational colleges must shoulder in the new era and English teachers should be no exception. Adhering to the theory of "China's foreign language education" and the theory of "second language acquisition rooted in China, facing the world and serving the community of human destiny", taking the *College English Curriculum Standard for Higher Vocational Education(2021)* as the basis, this reform actively gives play to advantages of curriculum education and build an English curriculum ideological-political system^[3]. Ideological-political education runs through the whole teaching process, pays attention to value orientation, and integrates Chinese cultural element so that students can not only have an international vision, but also be able to tell Chinese stories in English^[4].

4.2.2 Reconstructing English Curriculum Objectives

The primary task of carrying out OBE-based English teaching is to plan course objectives, and reconstruct the English course objectives on the basis of fully analyzing and integrating cultivation objectives of various majors and combining characteristics of English courses. OBE-based English teaching can be divided into two levels: cultivating comprehensive English application ability and improving vocational English ability. The goal of the first level is to require students to have a relatively solid foundation in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation skills, and master relatively proficient English daily communication skills; the goal of the second level is to require students to be able to use English fluently to complete future jobs related tasks; The goals of the two levels are gradual and ascending in steps.

4.2.3 Rebuilding English Curriculum

OBE education concept highlights reverse design of curriculum, that is, final learning result of students is a prerequisite, dominates curriculum objectives, and generates a corresponding curriculum. According to reconstructed English curriculum objectives, the reconstructed English curriculum should include two modules: basic English and professional English.

This is consistent with the requirements of *College English Curriculum Standard for Higher Vocational Education* issued in 2021: the basic module corresponds to basic English, which is a compulsory content for students of various majors. It aims to lay a common foundation for the core literacy of English at this stage, so that all students can meet requirements of English academic quality level 1 and meet graduation requirements of higher vocational education. The expansion module is for students to choose content of study according to their own needs, and forms a progressive relationship with the basic modules for students of different majors, levels and interests to learn after completing the basic modules, including professional English.

4.2.4 Innovate teaching mode of English

Learner-centered teaching and cooperative learning are advocated by OBE educational philosophy. Under OBE educational concept, English teaching can be carried out in real scenario, where students can simulate workplace situations and learn English skills that are needed in their future work. In this way, students will be more interested in learning English and have chances to accumulate hands-on experience.

4.2.5 Improve English course evaluation system

OBE education concept advocates attaching importance to daily assessment and evaluation, and employs multi-dimensional and diverse evaluation methods. Under OBE educational concept, English teaching adopts an evaluation system combining formative evaluation and summative evaluation. Formative evaluation takes weeks as a period, and uses a combination of student self-evaluation and mutual evaluation to observe and record students' participation and completion of learning tasks every week. Formative evaluation helps to promote students to pay attention to usual course learning, and can promote students to participate in course learning more actively and seriously, so as to effectively ensure the achievement of final learning outcomes. Summative evaluation is based on units or chapters

of the course, and teachers are responsible for organizing and testing students' mastery of the course learning content and the level of related abilities.

5. Practice of OBE teaching reform of English for international cruise ship management

5.1 Teaching objectives

Cultivation objectives of international cruise crew management majors are as follows: mainly for cruise ships, five-star hotels and other tourism enterprises; to cultivate students sense of social responsibility, professionalism, normative awareness, innovative thinking, enterprising willingness, cooperation, and professional quality in the modern service industry; to enable students to engage in the service and management of cruise ships and foreign-related high-star hotels and master high-quality technical and skilled talents.

Employment opportunities of international cruise crew major are as follows. After graduation, international cruise crew major students are suitable to engage in restaurant service, room service, front desk reception, recreational services, cruise marketing and ship administration in domestic and foreign cruise ships, high-star foreign-related hotels and tourism-related industries. The basic positions of graduates are generally restaurant waiters, room waiters, front desk receptionists, cashiers, commodity salespersons, recreational waiters, etc. After several contract periods, according to individual performance and ability, they can be promoted to management level or department head.

According to the above analysis, objectives of English course for the international cruise crew management majors are formulated as follows: to pay attention to mastery and improvement of students' comprehensive oral English and cruise professional English, and help students master common English expressions for cruise-related positions and common English for workplaces; to focus on oral English related to work situations, and cultivate students' English thinking habits and English expression skills in work, study and life. Based on the academic situation and students' career goals, this course is based on the principle of teaching students in accordance with their aptitude and task-driven, tailor-made English learning goals for each student, and pays attention to sustainable development of students.

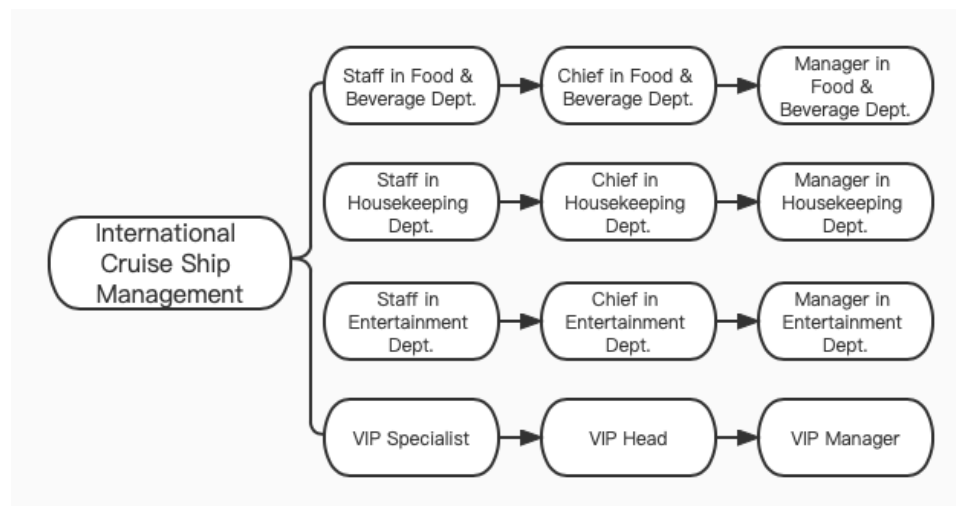


Figure 1: Posts for international cruise crew management graduates

As can be seen from figure 1, career paths of graduates majoring in international cruise crew management include staff in Food and Beverage Department, Housekeeping Department, Entertainment Department and VIP specialist. English skills they need to master include English language application ability (listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation) and the ability to use English to carry out service activities (serving food and beverage, receiving guests, providing entertainment, etc.).

5.2 Curriculum

English curriculum in higher vocational colleges must be in line with relevant industry and conduct

full research on it. Whether international cruise companies are European and American routes or Asian routes, the work language of service is English. Working on cruise ships involves environment of multinational staff. Customers on cruise ships come from all over the world, and countries visited by cruise ships are also diverse. Therefore, staff of international cruise ships must have good English communication skills, so as to communicate effectively with colleagues and provide customers with high-quality services. Documents, emails, training materials, and publicity notices for work on cruise ships are also all written in English. Good English reading and writing skills determine the career development of cruise crew members. In addition to daily communication English, professional cruise crew members should also master a certain number of different categories of professional English, such as basic maritime English, Chinese and Western food, and English expression of alcohol.

Based on the above reasons, English course system of the international cruise crew major can be composed of the following two modules: basic English module and professional English module.

According to *College English Curriculum Standard for Higher Vocational Education* issued in 2021, basic English module has three themes, 8 topics, and 128 class hours. It covers the common workplace situations of international cruise crew management students, and lays the foundation for the English learning of cruise majors. Professional English covers specific vocabulary and certain work situations, such as bar-tending.

5.3 Teaching methods

Teaching will be organized according to talent cultivation objectives and students' cognitive characteristics and ability level. Teachers will simulate real work scenarios, assign task-driven tasks to fully stimulate students' vitality, and implement online and offline mixed teaching. Online platform will be effectively integrated with offline teaching to help students achieve curriculum objectives through mixed teaching. Considering differences of different students' English foundation and learning ability, teachers will distribute different teaching materials according to their aptitude to make English learning develop towards personalized learning and active learning, and cultivate students' autonomous learning habits. Teachers will guide students to make full use of various teaching resources and improve students' information literacy through autonomous learning, cooperative learning and inquiry learning.

5.4 Teaching management

In combination with teachers' teaching quality evaluation methods, the school formulates detailed rules for OBE teaching evaluation and conduct annual evaluation on it. It incorporates teachers' actual performance in OBE teaching reform into teachers' performance evaluation as an important basis for excellence evaluation and professional title promotion.

Through strengthening guidance, monitoring and inspecting teaching process, quality evaluation and continuous improvement, the school ensures that the established teaching objectives of English teaching will be achieved^[5]. Besides, the school will strengthen daily organization, operation and management of English teaching, regularly carry out diagnosis and improvement of curriculum construction and teaching quality, establish and improve teaching efficiency evaluation system such as class patrol, class attendance, teaching evaluation and learning evaluation.

5.5 Teaching evaluation

A scientific teaching evaluation system will be established to carry out academic evaluation based on OBE teaching concept and subject core literacy. It takes into account of diversity of evaluation subjects, evaluation methods and evaluation process: combination of teacher evaluation, student mutual evaluation and self-evaluation, combination of in school evaluation and out of school evaluation, and combination of formative evaluation and summative evaluation. Besides, it properly includes relevant industries, enterprises and social organizations to participate in assessment and evaluation; the purpose of it is to improve monitoring, evaluation and feedback mechanism of students' learning process, guide students to realize self-management and active learning, and improve learning efficiency. In the English assessment of international cruise ship management, the proportion of formative assessment accounts for 50%, 40% of which refers to students' completing simulation work projects (mainly listening and speaking), and the other 50% covers students' classroom attendance and final examination. Through this measure, students' enthusiasm and initiative to participate in project regularly are mobilized, and their English application ability to complete projects is improved. So do students' project participation

and achievement of curriculum objectives.

6. Conclusion

Since the beginning of 2019, China's vocational education has focused on high-quality development, and the quality of talent cultivation is an important criterion to measure high-quality development. How to improve cultivation quality of application-oriented talents is a difficult issue faced by every higher vocational college. OBE pays attention to realization of students' future job needs and learning objectives, which is in line with teaching law of higher vocational education. It is an inevitable trend to integrate it into higher vocational English teaching. Through adopting OBE in English curriculum, higher vocational colleges will provide students more tailor-made and targeted learning objectives and curriculum, which will bring profound changes to present English teaching.

Acknowledgments

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