

Reform and Practice of English Teaching based on OBE Concept in Higher Vocational Colleges ----Taking tourism management as an example

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Abstract: *Outcome-based Education (OBE) is one of the important ways 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vocational colleges: disconnection between basic English and professional English, old-style teaching methods and outdated teaching contents. Then, it introduces ideas, objectives and contents of OBE English teaching reform in Jiangsu Maritime Institute. Finally, taking tourism management as an example, it elaborates on practice of OBE English teaching from the perspectives of teaching objectives, teaching contents, teaching methods, teaching management and teaching evaluation.*

Keywords: *OBE; English teaching; Tourism management; Reform in education*

1. Introduction

With the advancement of global economic integration, English plays an increasingly important role in economy, trade and cultural exchanges among countries. English competency has also become one of the necessary comprehensive qualities for graduates of higher vocational colleges. As a compulsory course in higher vocational colleges, English is an important course through which students' English competency can be cultivated in higher vocational colleges. Introducing concept of OBE and implementing student-centered teaching model has become a hot issue in English teaching reform in higher vocational colleges.

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 learning objectives, how to help students achieve learning objectives, and how to assess students' learning objectives.

OBE focuses on effectiveness and output of educational institutions and evaluates effectiveness of teaching by analyzing substantive successful experience that students can achieve in their future life, rather than limited to teaching itself. Under the background of OBE 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 experience 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.

Students' learning outcome is the main concern of teachers, who would obtain students' learning status through various forms of communication, interaction, test and discussion and they will design targeted teaching content according to students' foundation to truly realize curriculum objectives according to their aptitude. Students receive teachers' guidance in classroom teaching, build professional core quality through self-exploration and accumulation, improve hands-on operation ability through teaching practice, cultivate cooperation consciousness and accumulate work experience through teamwork, improve employment skills through practice and training, and realize early

employment through innovation and entrepreneurship.

OBE model 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. OBE has always been an important educational reform achievement guiding engineering education reform. 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 professional English

For many higher vocational colleges, there is a disconnection between basic English and professional English, and there is also a lack of transitional stage of trade English. Basic English focuses on cultivating students' listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation ability of daily English. After learning basic English, students directly enter professional English stage. In the face of a huge amount of new words, students are often overwhelmed and it is difficult for them to adapt and the teaching effect is not good. In addition, basic English and professional English in some higher vocational colleges are managed by different departments, which makes it more difficult to achieve integrated design^[2].

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. Teaching methods still follow traditional English teaching methods, focusing on teachers' explanation, and fail to consider 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.

3.3 Outdated teaching content

Teaching content is still based on textbooks with old texts which is difficult to arouse students' interest in learning. Students from higher vocational college have distinct personality characteristics. With the advent of the information age, students are eager to contact newer and faster information. At the same time, they can contact the latest information in various ways and channels. Taking students as the center, the teaching design of English in higher vocational colleges should focus on books, supplemented by extracurricular information tools, and keep pace with the times.

4. English teaching reform based on OBE concept 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*. The purpose of the plan is to promote 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 the workplace, multicultural communication, language thinking and autonomous learning, guiding students to broaden their international vision, strengthen their cultural self-confidence, and cultivate students' 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* as the basis, this reform actively gives play to advantages of curriculum education and build an English curriculum ideological-political system. 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^[3].

4.2.2 Cultivating students' English competency

This reform implements concept of student-centeredness, ability orientation and continuous improvement. It adheres to the principle that the main body, purpose and effect of teaching lie in learning in order to realize transformation from paying attention to teachers' teaching to students' learning. When designing teaching activities, teaching process and testing teaching effect, teachers should pay more attention to students' "learning", that is, learning results, learning efficiency and effect, autonomous learning ability, learning to think, learning to do and learning combined with thinking to unify knowledge and practice. Through English learning in higher vocational colleges, students should achieve development goals of four core qualities set in the new curriculum standard to lay a good foundation for further English learning, employment and lifelong development.

4.2.3 Promoting teachers' professional development

Under the framework of the school OBE reform, higher vocational college English teachers should continue to emancipate their minds in teaching reform, actively serve national needs, school positioning and talent cultivation, update teaching ideas, innovate teaching modes, change teaching methods and means, and constantly improve information literacy based on deep integration with modern information technology and other professional courses. The plan aims to build a high-quality higher vocational English teaching curriculum system and multiple curriculum resources to promote sustainable development of English teachers.

4.3 Reform measures

4.3.1 Establishing steering committee for OBE English teaching reform

A steering committee for OBE English teaching reform should be established in higher vocational colleges at the school level. The steering committee is composed of school leaders in charge of teaching, academic affairs office, off campus experts and main leaders of School of International Education to provide macro guidance and objective evaluation on implementation of English teaching reform. The steering committee has a OBE teaching reform management office, which is specifically responsible for studying and formulating implementation plan and relevant supporting systems of English teaching reform, providing strong support for OBE English teaching reform, and assessing and managing implementation of OBE teaching for teachers and students.

4.3.2 Establishing a OBE teaching reform team

The School of International Education has established a teaching reform guidance team with curriculum leaders, professors, associate professors and doctors as the core and a teaching reform implementation team based on teaching modules. It has established a mixed team with other schools, and team members are dynamically adjusted. According to English curriculum structure of higher vocational colleges, five teaching teams are established: basic module teaching team, industry English curriculum team, career improvement English teaching team, academic improvement English teaching

team and literacy improvement English teaching team.

4.3.3 Systematic construction of English curriculum system

English curriculum is the basis for developing students' core English literacy, highlighting the application of English language ability in workplace situations. The course content consists of two modules: basic module (including industry English) and expansion module. The expansion module is divided into three categories: career improvement English, academic improvement English and literacy improvement English.

The course content of basic module is general English for the workplace, which is a compulsory basic content for students of all majors in the institute. All majors should ensure that there are sufficient basic module class hours. The topic scope of the basic module is career related teaching topics, including career and individual, career and society, and career and environment. The selection of teaching materials shall be based on the principles of combination of nation-wide published textbooks and self-compiled teaching materials, combination of high-quality resources inside and outside the institute, and combination of online and offline teaching resources.

The expansion module is available for students with relatively high English proficiency and characteristic elective courses are encouraged to meet special needs. There are three types of expansion modules:

Career improvement English refers to workplace English courses for students entering different jobs in the workplace, mainly including business English, tourism English, maritime English, ship English, electro-mechanical English, crew English, artificial intelligence English, etc.

Academic improvement of English refers to English courses for students with intention of further study or studying abroad, mainly including college English listening and speaking, IELTS English, academic English, College English (CET-4 and CET-6), etc.

English literacy improvement refers to English courses designed to improve students' personal literacy and meet students' learning interests, mainly including English speech and debate, oral English, cross-cultural communication, British and American society and culture, selected readings of English newspapers and periodicals, etc.

5. Practice of OBE teaching reform of English for tourism management

5.1 Teaching objectives

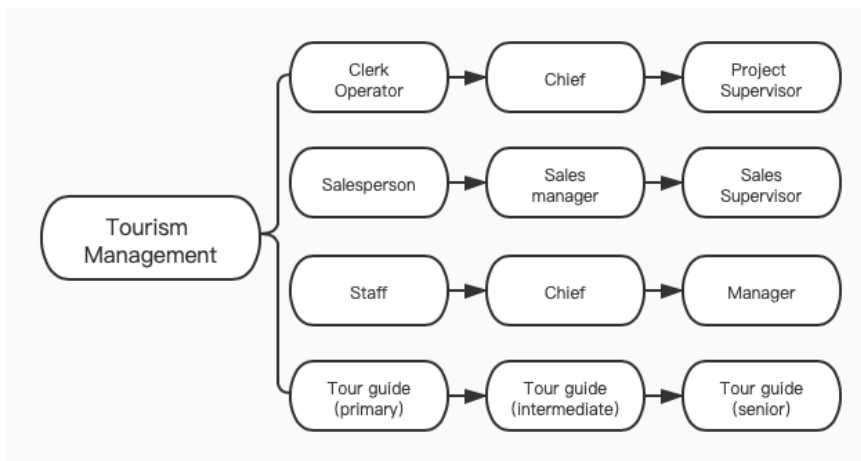
The cultivation objectives of tourism management are as follows: mainly for travel agencies, scenic spots and other tourism enterprises, cultivate all-round development of morality, intelligence, physique and beauty, have tourism professional knowledge, relevant skills and good English level, and be able to engage in the service and management of travel agencies and scenic spots on the front line of production and service, applied high-quality technical and skilled talents with the basis of career development.

Specific ability indicators related to English include: strong English conversation ability, proficient in using English to engage in professional work; be able to use professional English to participate in international tourism service activities^[4].

In integrated design of English in higher vocational colleges, English teaching objectives are designed according to the post and post development needs of students after graduation.

As can be seen from table 1, career paths of graduates majoring in tourism management include primary tour guides, scenic spot staff, travel agency product salesperson and travel agency clerks. 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 tourism activities (tour guide explanation, team operation, tourism reception, tourism product sales, etc.).

Table 1: Posts for tourism management graduates



5.2 Teaching content

English teaching content is carefully selected based on teaching objectives of tourism management. In order to facilitate teaching, English is divided into two stages: the first stage focuses on cultivating students' daily communication ability (including answering phones, asking for directions, suggestions, providing help, apology, request, etc.) and the ability to deal with comprehensive office business in English (e-mail, memo, notice, writing of daily travel arrangements, etc.) and reading ability (ability to obtain information in English); the second stage cultivates students' ability to carry out tourism activities in English (tour guide explanation, team operation, tourism reception, tourism product sales, etc.) The first stage and the second stage are not completely separated and have no connection. On the contrary, in the first stage of teaching, it is necessary to simulate real working scenes of students after graduation, focusing on cultivating students' listening and speaking ability and effectively improving students' ability to adjust to their future posts.

5.3 Teaching methods

Teaching will be organized according to students' cognitive characteristics and ability level. Teachers will simulate real work scenes, 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 adopt different teaching materials according to their aptitude to make English learning develop towards personalized learning and active learning, and cultivate students' autonomous learning ability. 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 self-management and active learning, and improve learning efficiency. In the English assessment of tourism management, the proportion of formative assessment accounts for 70%, 40% of which refers to students' completing simulation work projects (mainly listening and speaking), and the other 30% 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 teaching objectives.

6. Conclusion

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 applied talents is a difficult problem 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 teaching content, which will bring profound changes to present English teaching.

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