

Analysis on the Application of OBE Concept in College English Teaching

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Abstract—The OBE concept has been widely used in the reform of engineering education in the United States and other developed countries, attracting great attention from the academic circles. At present in China, many universities have recognized the superior teaching and guiding effects of this concept in cultivating students' independent learning and promoting their application of knowledge in practice, and begin to apply it in various fields of higher education system. Under the influence of this new trend, OBE is applied to college English teaching to explore more innovative and efficient ways for the future talent training and education reform.

Keywords—OBE concept; college English; learning outcomes; practical ability; education reform

I. INTRODUCTION

With the continuous deepening of the reform of college English teaching in China, researchers and educators have been exploring new teaching concepts and methods in recent decades to improve the teaching effect of English classes. Through innovative ways of teaching, students are hoped to quickly and thoroughly master language knowledge and accordingly acquire the ability to apply English in practical context. Since the traditional teaching modes no longer meet the needs of current English learning, a new mode aiming at the expected outcomes, which can reversely direct the implementation of teaching and learning, is adopted to make up for what the traditional ones lack. In recent years, the exploration of English teaching under the influence of this OBE concept has drawn the increasing attention from academics in various fields. Through the statement and analysis of OBE concept, this paper will offer a profound understanding of this innovative educational mode. It first, introduces the original source and current application of OBE concept. In addition, it elaborates on the distinctive features of teaching integrated with OBE concept. Finally, it expounds the teaching objectives, the detailed teaching implementation in different stages and the according practical effects of college English teaching under the guidance of OBE concept.

II. DESCRIPTION OF OBE

OBE, also known as results-oriented education, was first proposed in the United States by Spady and others academics,

and was subsequently widely used in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, being one of the main educational reform concepts. OBE covers every step of study, with clear teaching objectives being originally set, and the following teaching process strictly going around them to carry out the teaching mode which concentrates more on students' practical ability. This educational concept, guided by learning outcomes or effects, emphasizes the practical output of learning, which is also positioned as the researching purpose. Considering the optimized reversing influence on learning process, we explore to employ it in promoting the quality of college English teaching.

III. ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF OBE

A. Clear Positioning of Target Results

The principles of curriculum design under the OBE concept require schools and teachers to accurately focus on the students' final learning outcomes, and to guide students to recognize and target learning outcomes as a driving force and direction. This is the starting point for the curriculum design. Its correctness directly determines the effectiveness of the future learning process. Therefore, in order to draw a clear picture of future for the students, attention is paid to the goal of learning objectives, but also to the effective social research as well. The blueprint for learning outcomes should be as specific, clear, and objective as possible to ensure that the subsequent curriculum design achieves the desired results.

B. Reversing Design

The traditional order of learning is to learn first and then to yield the results from learning. According to the past practice, students are slightly passive in their learning mentality because of their concentration is much on the learning process, not on the result. Their goals for future achievements are not clear enough. Over time, such a learning mode has no promotion effect on learning motivation and interest. The advantage of OBE's reversing design is that our curriculum implementation process is precisely designed according to the results to be achieved, which ensures the direct effect and influence of the learning design form on the idealized results, that is to say, compared with the traditional way, the reversing design is more effective in helping students to achieve learning outcomes and achieve the desired capacity and level.

C. Individual Differences

The traditional curriculum design emphasizes the learning process and recognizes the necessary impact of the learning process on the results, but regularly ignores the individual differences of students. Even if different students study under the same curriculum model, there is still a large gap between the results of the harvest, due to their differences in learning abilities, learning styles, knowledge bases, cognitive perspectives, attitudes of interest, etc. The OBE education concept emphasizes that every student has the opportunity to achieve the desired learning outcomes. In the curriculum design and learning process, each student's personality and characteristics are fully considered. Therefore, the goals that accord with their future development for each student are set in advance. Through the curriculum implemented by the flexible design, each student will be encouraged to achieve the desired results through hard work and study.

D. Higher Demands on Teachers

Under the OBE concept, teachers should encourage students to have high expectations for learning outcomes. In the positioning of learning outcomes, we try to raise the standard and set challenging difficulty so that students can reach a higher level after completing certain learning process. Rigid requirements are also in place for teachers. On one hand, it is necessary to conduct specific research and analysis to evaluate the expected outcomes of learning, ensuring the connection between results and social needs and enabling students to apply what they have learned, in line with the standards of demanded talents; On the other hand, according to the individualized differences of students, the learning process of different content is formulated, so that each student can fully exert his or her abilities and participate in the learning task based on what they excel in. All of these require teachers to have a certain high-quality ability to ensure that the curriculum mode under the guidance of the OBE concept achieves the expected training results, and students can thus achieve what they've expected in learning.

E. Emphasis on the Integration of Knowledge

The knowledge learned in the traditional curriculum system seems to be sound, but the knowledge points taught in classroom are mostly separated. After the students complete certain period of study, some of them are still weak in grasping all those knowledge points in full, not to mention the applying ability in practice. However, through the reversing design, which drives learning process with target learning results, OBE mode can integrate those originally-separated knowledge points into a much comprehensive teaching process by initially aiming at the goal of future achievement, so that students can more efficiently grasp the knowledge content in textbooks, and gain an all-round mastery of knowledge through practical application and the analysis of real cases connected with results.

F. Students as the Main Body of Teaching

OBE pays more attention to the knowledge input and the output of students in the process of learning, with less stress

placed on the teaching content and level of teachers; it puts more emphasis on the researching and practical ability of students, rather than the mastery of knowledge in books. In the process of teaching, teachers develop learning plans and contents according to the learning tracks of each student, helping them to grasp the learning objectives and take full charge of their learning progress. If the awareness that learning is closely related to their own benefit is gained, students are prone to stronger self-learning initiative and motivation, which help to further their range of vision and set higher learning goals for their future study.

G. Evaluation Methods

Compared with traditional curriculum methods of evaluation, OBE emphasizes the individual progress of students and weakens the comparative evaluation among students within the group. The evaluation standard highlights the connotation of the results and the space for student progress, and sets the diversified multi-gradient evaluation scale based on the improvement of students' individual learning effects and the completion degree of target results harvested. With such evaluation method, teachers can quickly grasp the gap between students' learning state and the anticipated idealized goals through evaluation results, so as to adjust teaching strategies and improve methods in a timely manner so that teaching can ultimately reach the targeting effects.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF OBE CONCEPT IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

A. Teaching Objectives of College English Courses

With the gradual deepening of the reform of higher education, under the background of global economic integration and the "Belt and Road" strategy, the demand for talents with applied foreign language ability in various fields is gradually expanding. The overall teaching goals of the college English course are set as follows: through the study of English course at the university level, students are able to have a good language foundation and cross-cultural communication awareness, possess global vision and harmonious communication skills, and be equipped with the abilities of exploration, speculation, innovation and learning in the field of personal development and research, and a high level of comprehensive cultural literacy and patriotism, thereby meeting the practical needs of society, economy and personal development.

B. Teaching Implementation in the Basic Stage

Under the guidance of the above-mentioned macro-training objectives, based on the results-oriented nature of OBE, college English courses in college should first reflect the basic teaching objectives in general education. That is, after the students have finished the college English courses, they are able to comprehensively master the use of English in the aspects of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating; according to the outline of the CET-4, students are expected to improve their practical application of words, phrases, grammar, reading, writing, listening and the relevant

cultural knowledge in English, with the aim of cultivating all-round English ability which will contribute to the quick adaption to future work and study. The content of the courses is divided into two modules: listening & speaking and reading & writing. In the reading & writing part, it is refined into the parts of reading, writing, translating and speaking. Considering that most students are relatively weak in their listening ability, the ratio of listening classes is adjusted to 25% of the entire courses. The reading & writing courses focus on vocabulary accumulation, grammar knowledge, and text analysis. As for the specific implementation, in the first semester of the freshmen year, the English course is mainly grounded in the basic knowledge and skills of the language of English, helping students to complete the transition of study modes from high school to university and to adapt to university study life as soon as possible, so they can accordingly adjust the learning state. In terms of the learning content, particular stress is laid on spelling, basic grammar, and mastery of sentence patterns. In the second semester, in order to cope with the future CET-4, we stress on promoting students' comprehensive ability of applying language knowledge, and help students quickly improve their skills in the listening, translating, reading and writing modules. The teaching at the basic stage is guided by the learning outcomes, so that students can lay a solid language foundation for the next stage of learning.

C. Teaching Implementation in the Phase of Improvement

The ultimate goal of English learning is to enable college students to use language as a tool in their future employment and to possess the working ability and professionalism in terms of the language of English. With "employment" being oriented as the expected result, we emphasize the standard of "capability", and take students' career choices as the starting point to carry out English teaching in the stage of college English improvement. Beginning in the second year of college study, English courses also include ones like Daily Business Oral English, English Interview, Writing of English Business Letters, and Western Social Etiquette and so on, on the basis of core curriculum. The specific implementation of the courses emphasizes students' ability of language application in the environment of employment. The arrangement of curriculum is not limited to traditional classroom teaching. Through the simulation of real working occasions and the setting of similar working environment and background, students can make use of this way of classroom teaching to fully experience, learn and practice what will be required in their future employment, making efforts to yield idealized learning outcomes. In addition, in the improvement phase, we also set up special-purpose English courses based on professional divisions and employment-orientation, such as, electromechanical English, software English, transportation English, and English of economy and management. The content of each course is designed by English teachers together with teachers in related professions. The teaching mode is set closely to real occasion, helping students to apply the language knowledge they have learned in the practice of personal professional fields.

V. CONCLUSION

In summary, this paper applies the OBE concept to the research and analysis of college English courses to guide the construction of college English teaching system in the new era. Through applying the direct guiding effects of learning results on learning process, it is possible to set up teaching arrangement more flexibly and hence efficiently improve the quality of higher-education teaching. At the meantime, the teaching mode of OBE helps to promote students' learning outcomes and to cultivate the problem-solving ability, enabling them to obtain a more solid basic knowledge of English and the skills of application, and ultimately meeting the practical needs of current social and economic development. Taking into consideration what have been mentioned above, it can be significantly pointed out that the exploration and application of OBE concept will contribute positively to the improvement and revolution of college English teaching.

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