

Study and Practice of Talents Training Mode Based on OBE for Business English Major

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ABSTRACT

Traditional talents training modes can't meet the needs of new business workplace for business English professionals. This paper proposed a new talents training mode based on Outcomes-based Education (OBE) concept. Training objectives and curriculum system of Business English talents training are first determined and established based on professional requirements from the business industry. Curriculum system is divided into four functional modules, and time proportion of each module is allocated. Then, a new online + offline blended teaching method is presented based on learning-centered principle of OBE to change traditional passive learning practice. A formative multivariate evaluation mode is also designed and presented in the paper. Comparing with traditional evaluation method, it is out-come oriented. The effectiveness of the proposed mode is verified experimentally. Results of practical teaching indicate that the proposed talents training mode based on OBE concept has greatly improved students' learning initiative, and better met the professional needs of the business industry.

Keywords: OBE concept; Business English; talents training mode; student-centered; outcome-oriented

1. INTRODUCTION

Business English is a practical interdisciplinary major. Higher requirements have been put forward for business English majors by new technologies, new industries and new business modes in the new era. Business English Major aims to cultivate compound, innovative professionals with a solid English language foundation and business knowledge, who can undertake posts related to international business activities such as foreign trade, international e-commerce, business translation and interpretation, etc[1].

Outcome-based Education (OBE) principle originates from the reform of Elementary Education in the United States and Australia. Spady, an American scholar, defines OBE as clearly focusing and organizing educational systems to ensure that students achieve substantial success experience in their future lives[2]. Australian Education Sector defines OBE as an educational process based on achieving specific learning outcomes for students, in which curriculum systems and pedagogical evaluation are seen as means rather than purpose. The implementation of OBE consists of four parts, namely, defining learning outcomes, implementing learning outcomes, evaluating learning outcomes, and using learning outcomes. OBE concept takes learning outcomes as the core, and its overall idea is reverse designing and continuous optimization.

Talents training mode is essential in Major construction. In the talent training mode based on OBE principle, learning outcomes are the objectives for all teaching activities, and determine the cultivation objectives, curriculum system,

teaching methods and mode and evaluation and assessment, etc. Network learning space provides material basis for the reform of talents training mode of higher vocational education. It is urgent for vocational colleges and universities to update education concept, to apply modern information technology to reform teaching methods, to innovate teaching theory and to integrate teaching resources and to construct a harmonious teaching ecological environment.

2. CURRICULUM SYSTEM AND TEACHING MODE BASED ON OBE FOR BUSINESS ENGLISH MAJOR

Facing the challenges and requirements proposed by the new era, new technologies, new industries and the new characters brought about by the new business mode, we must optimize the teaching system of Business English Major based on OBE student-centered and outcome-oriented concept[3]. The first step of optimization is to set up professional talents cultivation objectives according to the development needs of society and industries, as well as college positioning[4]. The second step is to design the curriculum system to meet the cultivation objectives, then the third is to choose the teaching contents. Finally, a student-centered teaching system is formed.

Business English Major is a typical application-oriented interdisciplinary, involving several disciplines, such as linguistics, economics, management, law and sociology and so on[5]. Curriculum system of this major cannot be simply understood as "English + economy", "English +

management" or "English + law". When curriculum system is designed, the following consideration should be taken into. First, business knowledge should be organically integrated into English language teaching and learning in designing curriculum content, to highlight the interdisciplinary characteristics of business English, and to avoid simply adding knowledge in other disciplines to English language knowledge. Second, the proportion and sequence of different courses in the curriculum system should be considered as a whole, and emphasis should not be only put on language or business, and only on theoretical courses or practical courses.

Table 1. Curriculum System for Business English Major

Course Module	Module Function	Main Courses	Proportion (%)
English Language	Cultivate English language basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating	Intensive reading, extensive reading, listening, speaking, translation, writing, business English correspondence, interpretation, etc.	30
Business	Cultivate business communicative competence in business context	Economics, management, International Commercial Law, International trade, International E-commerce, marketing, etc.	35
Culture	develop intercultural communicative competence	Chinese, Brief introduction to Chinese Culture, Translation and culture, Cross cultural business communication, etc.	25
Certificate	Develop business English practical application ability	Cambridge Business English certificate, Translation qualification certificate, CET, IELTS, TOEFL, etc.	10

Third, experts from enterprises and industries should be invited to participate in designing the curriculum system. Fourth, each course's objective should conform to related graduation requirements. Each indicator of graduation requirements should be realized by two to three courses. Curriculum system for Business English Major is proposed in this paper, as shown in Tab.1. The curriculum system should be continuously adjusted and optimized according to the needs of and feedback from the society.

According to a document released by the State Council, vocational institutes should set majors in line with industrial transformation and innovation, adjust mechanism for demand-oriented training programs. Enterprises are encouraged to participate in the operation of Vocational colleges and universities, and to grant more internship vacancies to students to strengthen cooperation with educational institutes.

Teaching Mode based on OBE concept is designed and put forward in this paper, shown in Fig.1. The Teaching Mode is designed in the context of international business scenes and practice, fully applies the Internet and its convenience. The Teaching Mode is learning-centered and includes four integral parts: future posts, certificates, courses teaching and competitions. The mode invites enterprises to participate in talents cultivation, advocates integration of enterprises with vocational universities, requires students to be trained as interns, encourages students to get vocational qualification certificates, and applies student-centered blended teaching and learning.

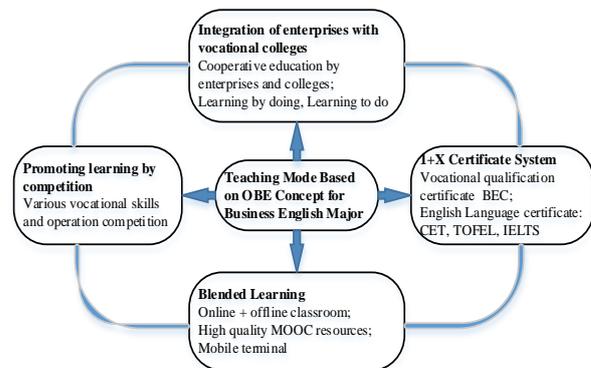


Figure 1. Teaching mode based on OBE concept for Business English Major

In 2019, the Ministry of Education of China issued the document to strengthen the construction and application of e-learning space, and to construct a new ecosystem of "Internet plus education". Network learning space should be made full use of to break through the traditional classroom teaching; new teaching model should be explored into and adopted; new evaluation and problem diagnosis methods and model should be employed, to realize personalized teaching and learning and to promote education fairness and improve the quality of education. In the document, vocational colleges and universities are especially encouraged to take advantage of the e-learning space to strengthen school-enterprise cooperation, to make full use of the role of market mechanism and cooperate

with enterprises to develop high-quality teaching resources, and make use of network learning space to innovate classroom teaching, practice and internship mode. This research makes full use of Internet and the online high-quality teaching resources and puts forward Online + Offline blended teaching and learning mode. Cloud class App and excellent MOOC resources are employed to implement flipped classroom teaching. The new mode divides teaching and learning into three phases, that is, pre-class preparation, students' online learning and classroom teaching. In the first phase, teachers upload all the relevant materials and requirements onto the Cloud class, including background information, pictures, videos, ppt, instructions, questions, quiz and questionnaires etc., to lead students to preview and to urge students to learn autonomously. In the second phase, students learn online autonomously at their own pace and complete the tasks given by the teachers. Then, students come to the third phase, that is, classroom teaching with questions and their confusing problems. Different from the traditional classroom, classroom teaching in this mode is teacher-leading, student-centered. The class goes on in discussion, in question and answer session, in problem-solving. Students come into classroom with questions, and teachers explains and answers these questions. Teachers lead students to discover problems and solve problems. Teachers design tasks and students complete the tasks under the guidance of the teachers'. Traditional classroom teaching of Business English includes such stages as background introduction, vocabulary learning, intensive reading of the text, sorting out the main ideas, analyzing language points and writing exercises. The goal of traditional classroom teaching is to impart all the language points in the text indiscriminately to the students. It is a kind of INPUT teaching and what students acquire is INERT knowledge. In this mode, Production-oriented Approach is applied. Language teaching is divided into input learning (listening and reading) and productive use (speaking, writing and translation). The mode advocates the organic linkage between input and output. It holds that language learning should not only focus on input, but should also on deep processing and output task, so as to improve students' language output ability and application ability. After three years' trial and practice, the survey results show that students' interest in learning is significantly enhanced in the new blended teaching mode, both students' attendance rate and participation in class are significantly improved, and students' satisfaction with the teaching quality is greatly enhanced according to annual teaching report. By comparison of the data results, it can be seen that the Online + Offline blended teaching mode is more favored by students.

For organization in constructing Business English Major, two committees are necessary. One is Teaching Instruction Committee, and the other is Teaching Supervision Committee. Teaching Instruction Committee is mainly responsible for setting up and revising such documents as cultivation objectives, graduation requirements, curriculum system, cultivation mode, and designing teaching lesson plan. The Teaching Steering Committee is mainly

responsible for checking whether training objectives and graduation requirements are achieved, for the revision of curriculum system, training mode and schedule teaching supervision.

3. SCHOOL-ENTERPRISE COOPERATION IN TALENTS TRAINING MODE BASED ON OBE CONCEPT FOR BUSINESS ENGLISH MAJOR

Talents training mode of work-study combination and school-enterprise cooperation in vocational colleges is recommended in the Outline of the National Medium and Long-term Plan for Education Reform and Development (2010-2020). OBE concept is outcome-oriented. As an applied discipline, Business English Major should not limit its talents training in classroom teaching. Cooperation between enterprises and colleges should be relied on[6]. Talents training mode based on school-enterprise cooperation is proposed in the research, as shown in Fig.2.

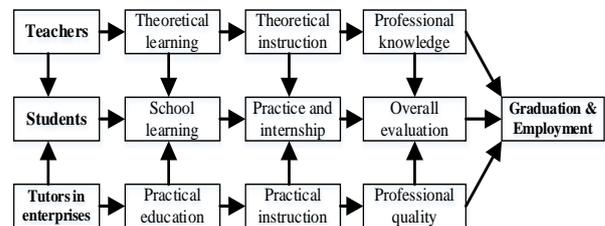


Figure 2. Talents Training mode based on school-enterprise cooperation for Business English Major

Practice and internship are the core in vocational education to improve students' application abilities. In talents training of Business English Major, practice time in enterprises should be extended; cooperation between enterprises and colleges should be established and strengthened; steady practice and internship base should be established, and more practice opportunities should be created for students. Workshop teaching mode is tried out and recommended in the research. In workshop teaching mode, plenty of real business cases of enterprises are provided to students as teaching and training materials; students' English language proficiency is greatly improved in real business contexts. On the other hand, professional service is also provided to enterprises. Teaching contents and practice objectives should also be modified timely with the changes in job markets, thus to ensure that talents training objectives are in line with the needs of the society, to comprehensively improve graduates' employability. Colleges and universities should innovate different new ways of cooperation. Teachers are sent to enterprises for practicing and training to improve professional levels. Enterprises provide colleges with teaching and training environment and platform. Outstanding professionals are sent to colleges from enterprises to carry out special training. Education fund and secondary school are to be co-established by colleges and enterprises to improve

enterprises' participation in subject development, to make full use of colleges and enterprises, and to deepen college-enterprise cooperation.

Employment is one of the most indicators to measure the quality of talent cultivation for colleges and universities. Business English major talent training should be employment-oriented and requires the enterprises' participation in the whole process of students' knowledge construction and ability cultivation. Curriculum system should be designed and adjusted according to the needs of enterprises. After completing the compulsory credits in colleges, students are sent to enterprises for practice and internship. Targeted talents training ensures that students' employment is completely in line with the needs of enterprises.

Talents training of Business English Major should meet the needs of current economic and social development. The teaching process should be student-centered and students'-future career-directed. Practice-cored curriculum system should be designed to cultivate students' ability instead of knowledge transformation. Scientific and advanced education concept and modern education practice ensure the quality of talents training.

4. FORMATIVE MULTIVARIATE EVALUATION IN TALENTS TRAINING BASED ON OBE CONCEPT FOR BUSINESS ENGLISH MAJOR

Teaching objectives of Business English have shifted emphasis from language skills to comprehensive language proficiency in workplace. In order to meet the needs of professionalization and diversification of Business English major, it is urgent to establish multiple evaluation system, which should focus on the multiple qualities required by Business English talents and includes multiple evaluation objectives, multiple evaluation contents, multiple evaluating processes, multiple evaluators and multiple evaluating means and methods [7].

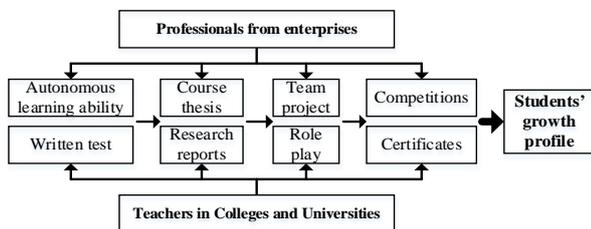


Figure 3. Formative Multivariate Evaluation in Talents Cultivation of Business English Major Based on OBE Concept

Evaluation mode proposed in the research is outcome-oriented, as shown in Fig.3. Comprehensive formative multivariate evaluation system is designed, in which the evaluation contents, evaluation ways, evaluation processes are diversified. Formative and practical evaluations are emphasized. Outcome-oriented reverse designing idea is realized by the formative multivariate evaluation mode.

During course study, the traditional examination by test paper is taken place by presentation, group work, role-play, reports, classroom performance, speech contest, etc., so students' learning outcomes are evaluated in a comprehensive manner[8]. The traditional final examination is replaced by several tests during the teaching process so as to facilitate students to participate in the whole teaching process seriously and accumulate knowledge and develop ability in time. Moreover, each evaluated content is matched with teaching objective. The to-be-evaluated indicator is highly in line with teaching objectives, teaching contents, teaching programs and evaluation ways[9]. Outcome-oriented concept is fully realized.

During practice and internship period, writing papers, research reports, group presentation, team project, role play are employed to evaluate students' learning and performance[10]. Such work process-oriented evaluation mode further promotes the organic combination of theoretical knowledge with practical career contexts, thus to improve students' comprehensive professional ability. Outcome-oriented philosophy of OBE is fully realized in such formative multivariate evaluation mode.

In addition to traditional examinations, other types of learning guidance and evaluation mechanisms are introduced into talents cultivation process in the research, such as competitions and professional certifications. Various vocational competitions are introduced into the proposed evaluation mode, such as National Creative English Contest, Business English Writing Contest, Reading Contest, Speaking Contest, etc. Various competitions are encouraged and designed within different courses. The competition results serve as the basis for the assessment of the students. For professional Certificates, Business English Certificate, organized and issued by Education Examinations Authority and Cambridge University Examinations Authority, is directly introduced into the proposed evaluation mode. Students majoring in Business English are also encouraged to actively participate in the examination of qualification certificates in foreign trade, finance, accounting, human resource management, financial management, justice and other industries. Students are guided to integrate English language learning into professional knowledge learning in other disciplines.

5. CONCLUSION

The research explores into Business English talents training mode based on OBE concepts in the new business context. The key issue of Business English construction is scientifically setting up talents cultivation programs that are consistent with the needs of economic and social development. The talents training mode based on OBE concept proposed in this paper is a complete education system, which consists of the following steps: determining cultivation objectives, constructing curriculum system, organizing classroom teaching and implementing

inspection and evaluation. Relying on the advantages of highly developed industries and energetic international business activities in Beijing area, the cultivation programs recommended in this paper has been put into practice and has achieved remarkable teaching effectiveness, greatly improving students' interest in learning, fully demonstrating the effectiveness of the talents cultivation mode based on OBE concept.

In conclusion, the training mode based on OBE concept proposed in this paper is outcome-oriented, takes students as the center, and concerns the cultivation of students' sustainable development ability. After practice in teaching, students' internal learning interest and enthusiasm are stimulated; students' comprehensive application ability is systematically and comprehensively cultivated and greatly improved; graduates can flexibly adapt to the challenges brought by various new changes. The talent training mode integrated with OBE concept can provide effective solutions for many problems existing in the current business English professional training process, and improve the effectiveness of Business English talents training.

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