Construction of a Blended Teaching Model for College English Reading and Writing Courses Based on the "OBE" Concept

Jinhai Wang[1], Qian Cheng[2,*], Xiangyuan Xu[3]

[1]*Zhengzhou University of Aeronautics, Zhengzhou, China*
[2]*Zhengzhou University of Aeronautics, Zhengzhou, China*
[3]*Zhengzhou University of Aeronautics, Zhengzhou, China*
*Corresponding author: 337084158@qq.com

Abstract: *College English teaching is in a new era of Chinese modernization education, with new technologies empowering new forms of teaching and new theories guiding new modes of teaching. college English must seek development in changing situations, adhere to value guidance, output orientation, and innovation in order to keep pace with the times. Based on the OBE teaching concept, teaching assumptions, and teaching process, and relying on smart teaching tools, fully utilizing online and offline teaching resources, a blended teaching mode for college English reading and writing courses is constructed. Taking Unit 4 "Study Abroad" from the New Edition of Advanced English Comprehensive Course 2 as an example, the process design of driving-facilitating-evaluating is demonstrated, exploring the implementation path of this teaching mode, which can provide innovative reform ideas for the teaching of college English reading and writing courses in the information age, with certain reference value.*

Keywords: *OBE concept; blended teaching; English reading and writing*

1. Introduction

With the development of the times, digital technology empowers higher education, and the teaching content, teaching form, and teaching methods of college English courses are constantly being updated and iterated. college English must seek development in changing situations to keep pace with the times[1]. In the teaching reform of college English reading and writing courses, how to concretize cutting-edge teaching theories into real teaching designs and apply them in the classroom, while integrating smart teaching methods, and seeking new reform ideas from the practical level, is a key issue that urgently needs to be addressed[2].

2. Analysis of the current situation

English reading and writing course teaching: The college English reading and writing course is a core course of college English, bearing the responsibility of solidifying students' foundation and improving the pass rate of college English exams. Because of this, the classroom usually focuses on improving students' comprehensive English application abilities, neglecting the cultivation of students' autonomous learning abilities, thinking abilities, and comprehensive cultural literacy, which leads to many problems.

2.1 Single teaching mode of the curriculum

Currently, the teaching of college English reading and writing courses mostly adopts the "intensive reading text method", which uses the text as a carrier to practice various language skills such as reading, writing, and translation from the perspectives of words, sentences, grammar, and discourse, aiming for students to master all the language points appearing in the text. The teaching process usually includes "theme introduction - warm-up activities - background knowledge - lesson explanation - post-class exercises", with classroom interactions focusing on discussion and questioning[3][4]. This teaching mode does not consider individual differences among students, and emphasizes input over output, resulting in students passively receiving knowledge, lacking initiative and creativity in learning, unable to

internalize knowledge as guiding principles for actions, leading to a "separation of learning and application".

2.2 Low participation rate in class

In text-centered reading and writing courses, theory and practice are separated, and the goal of classroom teaching is to master the content of the text. In such teaching processes, students have formed learning habits focusing on taking notes, waiting for answers, and memorizing key points. Classroom interactions usually revolve around answering questions, making sentences, translating, and doing exercises, lacking originality. Teachers' detailed explanations of the text reduce the challenging nature of the course, leading students to be lazy in thinking and passively accepting knowledge. The learning in the classroom cannot be applied in real contexts, students cannot generalize what they learn to other tasks, resulting in low self-efficacy among students[5][6].

2.3 Failure to reflect the educative value of the curriculum

The intensive teaching mode focusing on input language knowledge fails to reflect the humanistic characteristics and ideological and political education functions of language teaching. Although students seem to gain something at the language level, they cannot apply it, let alone spread Chinese culture. The lack of connection between classroom content and real communication results in a disconnect between ideological and political education and college English teaching. Many students can write exam essays above the medium level, but they cannot speak about traditional Chinese culture in English, such as the Four Great Inventions, the arts of qin, chess, calligraphy, and painting, or the four treasures of the study. Teachers fail to appropriately design communicative scenarios and introduce real cases in the teaching process, thus failing to cultivate students' language skills and cultural dissemination abilities.

2.4 Insufficient information expertise of teachers

In the information age, there is an overwhelming amount of learning resources online, and how to use them to enhance teaching effectiveness within the limited classroom space requires teachers to possess high information literacy. Currently, most teachers still primarily rely on traditional teaching methods, leading to dull and monotonous classrooms. Even when incorporating elements of information technology, most remain conservative and cannot inspire students' enthusiasm for learning. For example, some teachers only utilize basic functions such as taking attendance, checking in, and submitting assignments when using smart teaching platforms, failing to truly realize the one-stop smart teaching of teaching, learning, practicing, evaluating, and testing in the era of big data.

2.4.1 Teaching Design

The OBE teaching concept, teaching assumptions, and teaching process are highly applicable to the college English reading and writing courses and can be used throughout the teaching process[7][8]. Firstly, design teaching objectives based on the learner-centered approach and the integrated approach to learning and using, highlighting the teaching philosophy of holistic education. Secondly, design output tasks based on the output-driven and input-facilitated teaching assumptions, provide guiding materials, and guide students in selective learning. Finally, design a "drive-facilitate-evaluate" teaching process mediated by teachers, while integrating a blended teaching mode, corresponding to the three-in-one teaching model of pre-class drive, in-class facilitation, and post-class evaluation.

Course teaching design should be guided by the objectives of the college English reading and writing courses, taking into account students' English proficiency and needs, and designing language teaching objectives, competence development objectives, and values shaping objectives; the selection of teaching content should be based on textbook content, considering students' professional backgrounds, future workplace needs, and cross-grade needs, setting up relevant communication scenarios and output tasks; the entire teaching design implements the concept of "learning and using together", promoting students to learn and apply at the same time, combining learning with application, enabling students to feel the rewards during the learning process, enhance their confidence, and increase learning interests.

Specific implementation steps: (1) The teacher starts with the "pre-class drive" section, designs practical and challenging output activities based on the principle of "scene guidance", publishes output tasks through the smart teaching platform, allowing students to try output tasks, identify knowledge

gaps and deficiencies to generate learning motivation. (2) Based on the output tasks and students' completion, the teacher selects input materials, guides students to selectively extract useful information from the materials and apply them, uses a flipped classroom teaching format to design facilitation activities to promote the completion of output tasks. (3) The teacher fully utilizes student self-assessment, peer assessment, and teacher-student assessment models, combined with immediate and delayed evaluations, to achieve the goal of "promoting learning through evaluation", promptly identify problems and remediate them, and consolidate learning outcomes.

2.4.2 Course Teaching Practice

Taking Unit 4 Study Abroad in the "New Version of College Advanced English Comprehensive Course 2" as an example, this illustrates the hybrid teaching design of college English reading and writing courses based on OBE.

3. Teaching Content

The theme of this unit is choosing a major, with textbook contents including a main text and two extended readings. The main text talks about personal experiences in choosing a major, while the two readings discuss the pros and cons of studying abroad from the perspective of international students. In order to establish the relevance between the content of this unit and personal learning and future career planning, the teaching design can start from the group level and then delve into the individual level.

4. Teaching objectives

Language teaching objectives: recognize key vocabulary and sentence structures in the text, such as destination, diligence, stick to, What better way to do … than to do …/doing… and consolidate training; understand the structure of the article and the author's writing ideas, and achieve language teaching objectives in the context of ideology.

Skills development objectives: be able to express one's own thoughts in a specific context, develop a sense of language during the learning process; cultivate students' critical thinking skills, be able to view the advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad, the differences between arts and sciences, and the contradictions between personal ideals and parental wishes with a dialectical perspective.

Values shaping objectives: This unit focuses on inspirational education, reminding students to always remember that "struggle is the most beautiful backdrop of youth", using hard work to write a regret-free youth and create a wonderful life. By using the themes of homesickness and struggle in the text, cultivate students' patriotism, educate students to view the various challenges faced in the growth process in a dialectical manner, step out of their comfort zone, truly make changes, and become a better self.

5. Teaching process design

5.1 Online output-driven tasks

OBE theory requires output tasks to serve teaching objectives. Teachers must assign corresponding output-driven tasks to students on the premise that students understand the teaching objectives[9][10]. In the pre-class output-driven task section, "teachers present communication scenarios, challenge students' language output abilities, explain teaching objectives and output tasks, with the aim of stimulating students' desire to produce output and driving learning". Combining the unit's teaching objectives and content, teachers use "Rain Classroom" to release the unit's overall output task: If you have the opportunity to study abroad for further studies, how would you choose and why? Starting from this point, write an article titled "My View on Studying Abroad". At the same time, teachers design phased tasks and publish them on Rain Classroom, following the principle of progressive difficulty to assist in achieving the unit's overall output task.

Subtask1: Students form study groups, search online for patriotic figures who returned to China after studying abroad in the early days of New China, such as Li Siguang, Guo Yonghuai, Hua Luogeng, Qian Xuesen, Deng Jiaxian, etc., and tell their stories in English.

Subtask2: Pre-study the text, self-study the online course resources of ZUA in China MOOC, and

narrate in your own words the challenges faced by the text's author during his study at Harvard and his coping strategies.

Subtask3: Write a study abroad application letter of about 100 words, detailing your study abroad intentions, special skills, qualifications, and personal experiences, etc.

To assist students in completing the primary output task, teachers can assign guided tasks on the Word Master and WE Learn apps, specifically focusing on exercises related to core vocabulary in the text and pre-study content related to text structure; publish a micro-lesson "Chinese Overseas Returnees" on Rain Classroom to let students learn about the great contributions made by ancestors who returned to China after studying abroad in Chinese history, reflect on the purpose of studying abroad; share video materials of the Homeric epic "The Odyssey" and the Latin epic "Aeneid", helping students understand the emotional connection between the text's author and the protagonists of the epics, and better grasp the context of the article.

5.2 Classroom Input Promoting Teaching

Classroom teaching primarily aims at accurately facilitating students to complete output tasks. Teachers assess students' self-study situations through feedback from initial output tasks and in-class tests via Rain Classroom. Firstly, teachers lead students in studying the poem "Untitled", feeling the lofty ambitions and spirit of sacrifice for national salvation of a great leader during their youth, thereby evoking an emotional resonance among students to introduce the unit theme. The lesson includes studying messages from several famous writers to young people, such as: ① Chinese youths in the new era must work hard. Hard work paints a bright backdrop for a young life; ② Young people should work hard in learning the Marxist stance, viewpoints, and methods, mastering scientific and cultural knowledge and professional skills, and improving their humanistic quality, etc., to cultivate students' patriotism and love for their country, achieving the ideological goals of the unit.

Through group representatives sharing the character stories from Subtask 1, combined with the task completion status of micro-lessons, the teacher organizes students into Group Discussions to discuss the purposes, advantages, and disadvantages of studying abroad in different periods. Additionally, the teacher guides students to quickly skim through the two extended readings in this unit, extracting the main information about the pros and cons of studying abroad through comparison.

In the input facilitation process of Subtask 2, the teacher focuses on establishing a connection between the themes of "The Odyssey" and "The Aeneid" and the authors' experiences studying abroad. While discussing the authors' homesickness, the teacher further introduces how Odysseus, the protagonist of Homer's epic "The Odyssey", endured severe homesickness and overcame numerous challenges with memories of his family, ultimately reuniting with them after ten years. Mr. Yu Guangzhong's "Homesickness" is appreciated and students are guided to think about how to cope with college students' homesickness. They watch the English video "Homesickness" and discuss the homesickness experienced by overseas students and ways to cope with it. When explaining the association between the author and the protagonist Aeneas of "The Aeneid", the teacher can organize an in-class debate: ① Humanities or Science? ② Your Dream or Parents' Instructions? ③ Should we step out of our comfort zone? Subsequently, the teacher can combine the content of the text for language point training, introduce the bilingual video "Harvard's Happiness Class: You Have to Step Out of Your Comfort Zone to Change Yourself," and extract language points from the video to prepare for language output.

Subtask 3 places students ahead into their future academic and career planning. The process of writing an application letter is essentially a self-dialogue process. In writing, students self-examine, recognize their strengths and weaknesses, further clarify their future study and career goals, and re-plan their four-year college study and life. This subtask's input facilitation mainly involves explaining the writing task and reviewing excellent and subpar compositions through on-site teacher-student comments, error correction, and reconstruction. When explaining the writing ideas of the application letter, the teacher incorporates explanations of real CET-4 test questions, covering the format, content, and precautions of the application letter, summarizing commonly used vocabulary and sentence patterns. This task not only meets students' pragmatic needs for passing the test but also prompts them to plan their lives from a future perspective. By presenting various input resources, guide students to complete the overall unit task upon completing subtasks and submit the writing tasks in the class QQ group. Teachers provide timely evaluations and guidance, students conduct mutual reviews, identify issues, and correct errors; organize group votes to select the best work for display within the group for

all to learn from. Select outstanding and problematic assignments for focused commentary in class, allowing groups to learn from each other's strengths and weaknesses. Based on evaluation and feedback, each group revises and perfects the output task, submitting the final results to the Rain Classroom platform as a crucial basis for formative assessment and course evaluation.

5.3 In-Class and Post-Class Evaluation Sections

The objective of "student-teacher cooperative evaluation" proposed by the OBE (Outcome-Based Education) theory is to optimize and strengthen learning outcomes through subsequent evaluations, thereby improving teaching efficiency[11][12]. Pre-class mutual evaluations and voting for the best initial group task outputs allow students to perceive gaps in their knowledge while stimulating competitive desire among study groups, generating motivation for learning. During the teaching process, immediate evaluations by both teachers and students of the phased tasks identify strengths and weaknesses and propose suggestions for improvement, which aids in the internalization of knowledge and enables teachers to timely grasp the class rhythm, adjust task difficulty, and arrange teaching activities appropriately. Timely feedback and evaluation of student assignments on the intelligent teaching platform by teachers, along with showcasing excellent results within the class, facilitate mutual learning and collective progress among students. After class, teachers release related supplementary resources on the Rain Classroom platform and class groups, where students engage in mutual exchanges and submit reflection logs, aiding teachers in summarizing teaching effectiveness and continuously improving instruction. Apps such as WordMaster and WE Learn can record students' learning duration and completion status in real time, helping teachers understand students' knowledge acquisition timely, make appropriate teaching supplements and adjustments, and improve output quality.

6. Conclusion

The blended teaching model of college English reading and writing courses based on the Output-Oriented Approach can cater to students' different intrinsic needs, stimulating their initiative and creativity in learning English and enhancing students' enthusiasm and classroom participation, greatly optimizing the teaching model of college English. Throughout the teaching process, teachers establish output-oriented teaching goals, content aimed at facilitation, digitally empowered blended teaching models, and methods of collaborative evaluation between teachers and students. Following the three-process flow of "Drive - Facilitate - Evaluate", the teaching philosophy of student-priority is realized, playing the role of a teacher's scaffold. Teaching activities revolve around output tasks, adhering to the combination of output and input, which enhances students' comprehensive use of English, self-learning ability, critical thinking skills, and overall cultural literacy, achieving the dual objectives of both the instrumental and humanistic aspects of college English courses.

Acknowledgement

References

[1] Qiufang Wen. Construct the theory system of output-oriented method[J]. Foreign language teaching and research, 2015, (4):547-558.
[2] Xu Wen, Yun Xia. The realization of whole-person education in foreign language education[J]. Foreign language, 2014, (5):76-82.
[3] Mingyou Xiang. Adapting to the New Situation and Promoting the Construction of College English Curriculum System: A Commentary on the Curriculum of the College English Teaching Guide[J]. Foreign language, 2020, (4):28-34.
[4] Wenxia Zhang, Shujing Li. Problems and Countermeasures of College English Teaching Management and Teacher Development in the New Era[J]. Foreign language, 2020, (5):17-23.
[5] Wenjuan Zhang. Applying learning to practice is an attempt in classroom teaching to promote the

link of learning output oriented method[J]. Foreign Language Education in China, 2015, (4):10-17.

[6] Yang Gu. Research on the Blended Teaching Model of College English Based on the Concept of OBE [J]. Overseas English, 2022, (16):124-125.

[7] Dandan Han. A Genre-based Study on the Cultivation of Reading Ability of English Majors[D]. Harbin: Heilongjiang University, 2014.

[8] Zhengya Li. Construction and practice of college English teaching system based on OBE concept [J]. Journal of Xi'an University of Arts and Sciences, 2022, 25(4):83-86.

[9] Juan Peng, Ting Li, Xiaoxuan Song. A Study on the Effect of Emotional Intelligence on the Reading Ability of English Majors [J]. Journal of Kaifeng College of Education, 2019, 39(3):92-93.

[10] SPADY W G. Outcome-based instructional management: a sociological perspective[J]. Australian journal of education, 1981, 26(2):123-143.

[11] Chen Chen. A study on the construction of college English teaching model based on OBE concept under the background of big data[J]. Journal of Jilin Normal University of Engineering Technology, 2022, 38(5)85-87.

[12] Acharya C. Outcome-Based Education (OBE): A New Paradigm for Learning[J]. Triannual Newsletter, 2003, 78-82.