

# **Research on English Teaching Reform in Higher Vocational Education Based on OBE Education Concept**

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**Abstract:** *In order to cultivate and improve the English application ability of vocational college students, English is taken as a public basic course in higher vocational colleges. However, English teaching in higher vocational colleges recently in China has always had problems, such as uneven English foundation, insufficient attention and serious outdated homogenization of teaching content and teaching mode. English teaching in higher vocational colleges lack of its applicability, which has led to the fact that English education has always been difficult to meet the actual needs of employers. Aiming at this problem, this paper takes the OBE as the main guiding principle of English teaching reform and puts forward suggestions for English teaching reform in higher vocational colleges.*

**Keywords:** *OBE Education Concept, English Teaching Reform, Higher Vocational Education.*

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## **I. Introduction**

The concept of OBE was proposed in the United States reform of basic education at first, which is a student-centered and end-result oriented education model( Spady and Marshall, 1991). The OBE teaching model was initially applied to the training of industrial talents, focused on the learning outcomes of learners, and adopted the method of “reverse design and positive implementation”(Zhao Shutian, 2009), which was based on the final learning results that learners needed to achieve.

The OBE teaching model focuses on learning outcomes, realizing the transformation of the center from “teaching” to “learning” and focusing on the final learning results and personal future development of learners for teaching design and implementation (Shen, 2015). In the OBE model, teachers are often required to check the results of students after completing the learning tasks in the process of teaching higher vocational English, and change the teaching strategies and teaching methods according to the specific results of the students after completing the learning tasks. In this teaching mode, students can have a deeper understanding of theoretical knowledge and master practical knowledge more purposefully.

The purpose of the public English course is to enable students to master the most basic skills of “listening”, “speaking”, “reading”, “writing” and “translation” of English through the study, and at the same time have the ability to use English with the help of some auxiliary books and software (Kem&Thomas, 2014). Only by achieving the teaching goal can we really realize the role of higher vocational public English in the cultivation of high-quality technical and skilled talents( Halliday & Hasan, 2001).

That is, according to the ultimate professional goals, industry needs and the goal of talent training in higher vocational colleges, to design the teaching activities on reverse, implement the teaching content and teaching design positively, and realize the seamless connection between schools and enterprises, so as to cultivate high-quality skilled talents required by society, industry, enterprises and positions (Wen, 2014 ).

## **II. The Current Situation and the Existing Problems of English Learning in Higher Vocational Colleges**

### **2.1 Uneven English Foundation, Insufficient Attention to Learning, and Low Interest in English Learning**

At present, the diversified enrollment methods of higher vocational colleges, such as enrollment by college itself and targeted training and the expansion of higher education can result in a large difference in the English foundation of students in higher vocational colleges and it's likely to be a trend of polarization.

According to the English test of the students in the class I taught in the recent few years, on one hand, the students' English foundation is relatively weak, their enthusiasm for English learning is not high, and their learning habit is not good, which is manifested in absent-mindedness in the public English class and the students' low interest in learning English and low English scores in English test. On the other hand, students in higher vocational colleges generally do not pay enough attention to English learning, and they consider only learning professional knowledge and practical skills well can lead to be employed, but English is not very useful in the follow-up work position.

### **2.2 Inadequate and Outdated Teaching Content**

Higher vocational colleges in different regions have their own characteristics and have different majors to serve the actual needs of the local economic and social development (Jiang Bo, 2003).

English is a general education language course and it does not have obvious regional characteristics, so it is difficult to reflect the requirements of different regions for English talents in the process of economic and social development (Zhang Jinlong, 2023). The public English curriculum materials selected by higher vocational colleges in different regions are limited and teaching content are seriously homogeneous. Most of the teaching contents are the recognition and learning of words and grammar and many of them lack the scenario setting of different professional needs. Even if a small number of situational dialogues are inserted, they cannot keep up with the pace of the current work scene, and there is a problem that the English teaching content is not in line with the professional training goals with the fast iterative updating of the technology.

The contents of the recent English textbooks often pay more attention to students' ability in words recognition, reading comprehension and grammar rules but not the cultivation of practical English application ability, which will result in that the students are more concerned about their paper scores and they cannot say a complete sentence when they are needed to express their ideas or communicate in English although they can read some articles. In the long-time process of higher vocational English teaching, teachers rarely link English learning with the professional needs of higher vocational students and the English learning was simplified and cannot keep pace with the diversified development of English teaching linked with various and professional characteristics.

### **2.3 The Traditional and Outdated Teaching Mode**

As the enrollment of higher vocational colleges has generally expanded in recent years, the number of students in school has increased sharply and the phenomenon of large class sizes is common. As English is a public course, the increase in students has made the teaching task of English teachers more and more onerous. Most of teachers' working time is occupied by teaching tasks and they have little time to analyze the changes in students' learning conditions, which leads to the lack of reform in teaching methods and teaching design.

At the same time, due to the increase of the English teaching tasks, the requirements for the employment of English teachers have been reduced, resulting in some English teachers who have not undergone professional teacher training, such as advanced educational theories, teaching practical experience and teaching methods

training and so on, are engaged in English education only with English ability and are difficult to keep pace with the times. So the above problems of English teachers will directly lead to the inability of teaching methods to adapt to new students, which is also one of the direct reasons for the decline in the quality of English teaching in vocational colleges.

In the long-term traditional higher vocational English teaching process, the teaching objectives, teaching tasks, teaching contents and examination methods in the teaching process are all determined by the teacher. The students lack the opportunity to express themselves in language and they can only passively accept the teaching contents, so it is difficult for students to carry out personalized learning of English from their own actual situation and professional needs. Most of the teachers in the English classroom are full of words, reading comprehension and grammar and the atmosphere of classroom is dull, so the students' ability to apply English in practice has not been cultivated and the actual teaching effect is limited although teachers have made great efforts.

### **III. The Introduction of the OBE Concept to Improve the Effect of Higher Vocational English Class**

#### **3.1 The Shift in the Format of the Classroom**

In the previous education, the teacher was the leader in the learning process and exported the knowledge to the students in one direction, and the students just accept knowledge passively. Therefore, the learning effect is not effectively achieved.

However, the OBE teaching model emphasizes student-centered and output-oriented. The English classroom based on the OBE teaching model can be transformed into a teaching mode that combines multiple teaching methods such as inquiry-based teaching, group discussion and interactive teaching(Zhang et. al., 2000). Under the OBE model, the previous teacher-led teaching classroom can be transformed to teacher-student dialogue classroom (Wang Lei, 2023). In the classroom, appropriate teaching methods and models can be adopted according to the learning situation of students of different majors, with the help of modern information technology and digital teaching methods, such as online teaching and offline teaching.

#### **3.2 The Shift in Teaching Objectives**

At present, more attention is paid to the knowledge planned by the teacher but not the learning effects of students, resulting in that students cannot apply what they have learned flexibly. In the OBE teaching model, students are the centre of teaching and learning(Wang Luyao, 2024).

Therefore, the reform of higher vocational English teaching can be designed on reverse and implemented positively based on the principle of the OBE teaching model. Design teaching objectives and teaching content with students' needs for learned knowledge as the teaching focus and formulate multi-dimensional assessment models and personalized learning processes of different majors, so students in different majors can learn the required learning content independently and actively, and the English class can realize the high degree of unity of educational goals and final results to the greatest extent, through the transformation of teaching focus from "teaching" to "learning".

#### **3.3 The Transformation of Teaching Content**

Based on the OBE concept, higher vocational English teaching is no longer the goal of students' memorization, comprehension and answering questions of basic English knowledge to get high scores in examinations, but the improvement of their comprehensive application ability of English (Liu Lanhui, 2024).

Higher vocational English teaching should formulate teaching objectives based on the characteristics of different majors and disciplines. Guided by the needs of students and the teaching objectives, the teaching contents and learning modules can be designed pertinently, which can achieve the unity of needs in the student, the subject, the major and the society (Ma Zhimin, Dong Rongyue, 2023). The transformation of teaching contents can contribute to further the students' learning and lead students from simple knowledge learning to knowledge application, to improve students' problem-solving skills with the application of knowledge they learned.

### **3.4 The Transformation of Practical Teaching**

In the OBE teaching concept, the final learning outcomes of are not only the students' improvement of knowledge and skills, but also the practicability of students for the final learning results (Maureen Tam, 2014). As the cooperation between vocational colleges and enterprises are more frequent, a real professional environment can be created for students, but most training bases only emphasize the training of professional skills and ignore the application of English in practice.

If the application of English training is added to the training content in the training base, students can apply the English knowledge and skills learned from classroom to work practice. So that students can realize the importance of English learning and decide to improve their English application ability as they can. when they graduate, they will not only acquire the professional skills required for professional positions, but also obtain the ability to have a cross-cultural communication with foreigners.

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