

Integrating “Telling China’s Story” Into Teaching Design of College English Curriculum from the Perspective of Outcome Based Education

Guoping An^{1*}

¹Associate Professor, Foreign Language Institute of North China Electric Power University, Baoding, Hebei, China No. 213 mail-box of Foreign Language Institute of North China Electric Power University, 071000

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*Corresponding author: Guoping An

Associate Professor, Foreign Language Institute of North China Electric Power University, Baoding, Hebei, China No. 213 mail-box of Foreign Language Institute of North China Electric Power University, 071000

Abstract

Telling China’s story well is an effective way to enhance students’ English application ability and promote moral education. However, the insufficient integration of China’s story in current English textbook needs to be addressed. Based on the Outcome based education (OBE), this article aims to elaborate on teaching design and explore a blended learning model for integrating telling China’s story into college English courses.

Keywords: College English, Teaching Design, Telling China’s Story, Outcome Based Education (OBE).

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Necessity of Integrating “Telling China’s Story” Into College English Courses

As a compulsory course in higher education institutions in China, college English have obvious advantages due to the rich content and a wide audience. From a theoretical perspective, telling China’s story well in English is beneficial for enhancing the country’s cultural soft power and influence, and promoting the construction of China’s international communication capacity. From a practical perspective, telling China’s story in English can accelerate the pace of international integration, promote the reform of college English curriculum teaching, and meet the growth and development needs of college students in the new situation.

1.2 The Current Situation of “Telling China’s Story”

In China, research topics on “telling China’s story well in English” include theoretical exploration (Wang Aju *et al.*, 2019; Zhao Yingji, 2019; Zhao Dongxu, 2020), research on teaching activities (Zhang Guangming, 2018), investigation of teaching status (Zhao Yingji, 2019), and research on translation principles and strategies (Zhang Jie, 2019). Specifically, Wang Luqiu (2018), Wu Wei (2021), and Wu Xiaoliang (2021) discuss how to explore moral education elements related to Chinese culture or development in textbooks, and cultivate students to tell China’s stories in English; Yang Hua (2021) proposed using “telling China’s story

in English” and explored the practical path of moral education in English courses from three aspects: curriculum, extracurricular practical activities, and multiple evaluations; Wen Yingqian (2022) suggested that telling China’s story well in college English teaching can use a flipped classroom + blended learning model; Liu Na (2023) put forward a teaching practice strategy of “telling China’s story”, advocating to eliminate the blind spots in English communication and expression of Chinese culture among college students, and updating new teaching ideas for college English curriculum construction.

Based on the above, the research outcome of “telling China’s story” have the characteristics of broad coverage and perspectives. However, the most obvious problem lies in the insufficient teaching design which leads to improper selection of story angles, unclear story structure and poor educational effects. As a key university, students of North China Electric Power University have a good foundation in English and a strong desire to tell China’s stories. However, actual teaching practice has shown that the effectiveness of students’ storytelling still has a significant gap from “telling Chinese stories well” no matter in terms of content, language, structure or ideological sublimation. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate Chinese stories into university English class.

2. The Application of Outcome Based Education (OBE)

Outcome Based Education (OBE), proposed by Spady *et al.*, (1981), refers to a model that uses output as a task to drive educational goal. It is applied to curriculum teaching, breaking the traditional teaching model of “teaching first and learning second”. It advocates for the transformation of the educational model from “content driven” to “outcome driven”, starting from the learning outcomes that students should obtain when completing the course. Adopting the principle of reverse design, OBE has the following features, such as clarifying course objectives, organizing teaching content, implementing teaching processes, evaluating learning outcomes, improving the teaching quality, and forming a student-centered teaching model, which is highly consistent with the attributes of college English courses.

At present, scholars have begun to pay attention and implement OBE in teaching. For example, Bai Tana (2017) believes that under the guidance of OBE, the autonomous learning mode of college English should be optimized. Hu Rong (2021) introduced that universities should establish teaching objectives and curriculum system oriented by OBE, implement a smart classroom teaching model, carry out diverse practical activities, and establish a dynamic evaluation system. Yang Yang *et al.*, (2020) discussed the cultivation of students' moral education under OBE, and proposed suggestions from four dimensions: teaching objectives, teaching content, teaching methods, and teaching evaluation, providing new ideas for moral education in English courses. Liu Chenyan *et al.*, (2023) proposed a personalized

curriculum moral education plan based on OBE: knowledge, ability, and quality are integrated into one, with explicit and implicit dual lines and integrated with each other.

Although there have been many researches on the application of OBE, little research focuses on how to carry out teaching design and practice of college English courses. Therefore, this paper attempts to conduct teaching design research on the college English curriculum system based on OBE, aiming to solve the problem of “low efficiency of integrating China's stories into class”, and improve students' comprehensive application ability.

3. RESEARCH CONTENTS

3.1 Clarify Teaching Objectives

According to the “*Guidelines for College English Teaching*” (2020 edition), the teaching goal of college English is to cultivate students' English application ability, enhance cross-cultural communication awareness, while developing self-learning ability and improving comprehensive cultural literacy, so that they can effectively use English in their learning, social interaction, and future work, meeting the needs of the country, society, schools and individuals. Based on this, the research group takes “*New Standard College English*” (Volume 3) as the research object. According to the unit theme, the teaching objectives can be divided into three levels: knowledge, ability and values. All objectives revolve around the output in each unit, referring to Table 1:

Table 1: Teaching Objectives of College English Curriculum

Theme	Text	Teaching Objective		
		Knowledge Objective	Ability Objective	Value Objective
U1 Discover yourself	AR1: Catching crabs	Understand the changes in narrative perspectives; Understand the use of direct dialogue; Understand analogy	Master the six elements of narrative writing and practice imitation writing Beware of the "crab mentality"	Guide students to understand themselves, treat the influence of others correctly, and learn to pursue self-worth
	AR2: We are all dying	Understand English cultural load words; Understand the different expressions of "Death"; Understand the concept of "contrast"	Understand the different views of death in the East and the West; cultivate cross-cultural awareness	Maintain a positive and optimistic attitude towards life, and strive to make life meaningful; Cherish time
U2 Childhood memories	AR1: The Glass Castle	Understand the suspense method; Enhance the interesting effect of stories through detailed descriptions	Master the writing skills of using direct dialogue in English narrative texts; conduct imitation exercises	Guide students to establish correct views on wealth and values
	AR2: Cultural childhood	Understand the structure and characteristics of exposition articles;	learn to use examples to prove a viewpoint There are differences in the ways children are educated	Seek common ground while reserving differences, respecting cultural differences

Theme	Text	Teaching Objective		
		Knowledge Objective	Ability Objective	Value Objective
U3 Art for arts' sake	AR1: How we listen	Master the structure of exposition and thematic vocabulary related to music; Understand the analogy	Learn to use analogy to explain another complex and difficult thing, and practice imitation writing.	Music is a part of aesthetic education, guiding students on how to recognize and appreciate beauty
	AR2: The photo	Understand the structure of explanatory text and the thematic vocabulary related to "photos"; Understand the historical background of "The Kiss"	Learn to describe photos with accurate language and explore their inner meanings.	Photography is a part of aesthetic education, guiding students to appreciate the value of art.
U6 High days and holidays	AR2: Chinese or Western, it's time to relax	Learn about the most influential festivals in China and the West; Understand the writing structure, language of argumentative essays	learn concession techniques in the argumentative process and practice imitation writing; How to view the festival cultures of different countries.	Guide students to understand the significance of traditional Chinese festivals, and cultivate cross-cultural awareness

In instructional design, knowledge, abilities, and value goals can be presented as independent modules, but in terms of internal logic, the three are interrelated and organically integrated.

1. The realization of knowledge goals involves gradually expanding from words, individual sentences, sentence groups to discourse in order to get prepared for oral and writing production tasks.
2. The ability goal is achieved by increasing the difficulty of producing works. According to the difficulty of the output task, it can be divided into on-demand output and open-ended output. The difficulty of preliminary producing is relatively low, which is conducive to cultivating students' ability to collect, organize, and summarize information; the difficulty of open output is high, which is conducive to cultivating students' ability to analyze, summarize, compare and evaluate.
3. Value goals increase in cognitive difficulty, from initial understanding to understanding and then to recognition.

3.2 Integrating Socialist Core Values into Teaching Content

OBE focuses on what students have learned, so the selection of teaching content should always revolve around teaching objectives, and "should consciously integrate socialist core values and excellent traditional Chinese culture, guide students to establish correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values" (Higher Education Foreign Language Teaching Guidance Committee, 2020). The research group explores and refines unit themes, integrating cultural content based on the national, social, and individual levels of socialist core values. Specifically, as follows:

1. The elements of moral education at the national level refer to the dissemination of advanced culture and excellent traditional culture,

highlighting China's great achievements in economy, politics, science and technology, enhancing national self-esteem and pride, and spreading positive social energy;

2. The elements of moral education at the social level refer to the construction of a free, equal, just, and legal society, as well as the construction of a harmonious, civilized, and beautiful living environment;
3. The personal values of citizens refer to patriotism, dedication, integrity, friendliness, etc., spreading positive energy such as win-win thinking, altruistic spirit, and kindness towards others.

3.3 The Teaching Implementation Adopts a Blended Teaching Mode

How to tell "China's story"? Under the guidance of OBE, students are not only participants in the curriculum, but also co-creators of the curriculum. As an important means of constructing a curriculum system, blended learning has become a new form of education. This study intends to adopt a blended online and offline teaching model, including a main line (moral education); two subjects (teacher+student); three stages (planning; implementation; sublimation); six steps (interest based learning, exploration based learning, in-depth teaching, task based learning, collaborative research, and evaluation based learning) are taken to empower students with greater curriculum autonomy and stimulate their interest in learning.

1. Planning stage: prepare to tell China's story

Teachers select Chinese stories into online preview tasks through videos or reading materials, and uses the Unipus smart learning platform to carry out "interest-based learning", guiding students to "explore and enjoy learning". Through audio-visual and reading input methods, teachers helps students to have preliminary understanding about the words, phrases,

Chinese and Western cultural knowledge, and Chinese stories to be learned in this unit, stimulating their curiosity about the course. Preliminary learning outcomes can be formed.

2. Implementation stage: practicing “how to tell China’s story”

Teachers check preview tasks and give in-depth lectures on difficult points and key points, then teachers raise discussion questions related to the theme of this unit, achieving an organic integration of teaching and China’s stories. Various forms of class activity tasks are assigned, and students are organized to share and learn China’s stories collected in the first stage. Comparison, discussion, and analysis of Chinese and foreign stories are carried out to complete learning output - classroom oral presentation. This step is called “task driven learning”.

3. Sublimation stage: consolidating “how to tell China’s story”

Teachers provide story resources to students, guiding them to think at a deeper level. Meanwhile, they expand and compare China’s stories extended from the theme of this unit by reading or watching videos. Students are assigned to further consolidate “how to tell China’s story” in writing form on the basis of oral presentations, in order to exercise students’ written expression ability. In addition, teachers and students jointly evaluate the works.

3.4 Teaching Evaluation Adopts a Multidimensional Approach

OBE emphasizes the achievement of student learning outcomes. Therefore, this study adopts a multidimensional approach to measure students’ learning outcomes.

1. Diversification of evaluation subjects: utilizing teacher-student cooperative evaluation (TSCA) to cultivate students’ self-evaluation ability and ability to evaluate others, and incorporating evaluation scores into formative evaluation.
2. Diversified evaluation methods: combining formative evaluation (Unipus preview quiz + unit test + oral/written presentation + TSCA) with summative evaluation (final exam).
3. Comprehensive evaluation content:

The evaluation of China’s story production works involves language expression and the use of cross-cultural strategies.

1. Evaluation criteria:

The evaluation for language knowledge and skills is mainly explicit, and evaluation metrics (Rubric) can be used to provide clear, specific, and quantitative reference standards; the evaluation for moral goals is mainly implicit, indirectly reflected through the interplay of words and lines in telling China’s works, student reflection and mutual evaluation, teachers’ observation, questionnaire surveys, interviews and other forms.

4. Teaching Practice Effect

College English is a compulsory course for all majors in North China Electric Power University (Baoding). It usually has 64 class hours in the first semester. The current textbook is *New Standard College English Integrated Course 3*. The research group adopts OBE in each teaching class with the capacity of 60 students. The teaching practice of OBE runs through 16 weeks of a semester. The relationship between the teaching content, moral elements, and the planned output of China’s stories is shown in Table 2:

Table 2: The relationship between teaching content, moral elements, and the planned outputs of Chinese story

Units	Moral Element	Outputs Related to China’s Story
Unit1 Discover yourself	National level: self-pursuit should be in line with the national benefit	The story of Chinese people pursuing ideals
	Social level: pursuit of life value and meaning	
	Individual level: pursuit of self-worth	
Unit2 Childhood memories	National level: cultivating a harmonious social environment for the next generation	An incident that parents have the deepest impact on me
	Social level: building nurturing responsibilities	
	Individual level: caring for children	
Unit3 Art for art's sake	National level: Through art, understanding and inheriting Chinese traditions and Chinese culture	The most meaningful photo
	Social level: realizing the value of art	
	Individual level: enhancing personal artistic and cultural cultivation	
Unit6 High days and holidays	National level: Correctly understanding globalization, reviving traditional festivals, and transmitting the cultural effects in the festival scene	My favorite Chinese festival
	Social level: Inheriting and promoting traditional culture	
	Individual level: understanding cultural meaning behind festivals	

During the teaching process, reading promotes speaking and speaking promotes writing, achieving

synchronous improvement of reading, writing, and oral expression. Teachers encourage students to gradually

improve their language quality through the process of using language (implicit language learning), and further strengthen their basic language skills (explicit language learning) through systematic teaching designs for each unit, such as word, sentence, and discourse language exercises. Oral expression and written expression gradually progress, serving the production of works for the same China's story, and advancing the storytelling effect.

Teaching effect of OBE in college English can be observed through a questionnaire which is composed of 15 questions. 525 students from six teachers' classes are involved. Questions 1-6 mainly cover the content, form, students' understanding on OBE, and questions 7-15 mainly aim at the effect of each output and the overall effect of this semester. 89.59% of the students are satisfied with the teaching effect of narration ability of China's story under the guidance of OBE.

The majority of the students believe that this course helps them understand the national situation and Chinese culture, broaden cultural perspectives, and enhance cultural confidence. Their comprehensive English abilities and extracurricular competitions have been strengthened.

5. CONCLUSION

Under the guidance of Outcome Based Education (OBE), the learning objectives of students focus on telling China's story, thereby ensuring the consistency between teaching objectives and results to the greatest extent, and guaranteeing teaching effectiveness through designing a complete college English curriculum teaching system. Through tasks and assignments assigned by teachers in blended learning, students' identification with their own Chinese cultural values can be enhanced through analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, and innovating the cultural differences between China and the West.

As to the limitation of the study, future research can attempt to use qualitative research methods such as interviews and classroom observations to present the dynamic development of student participation in telling the Chinese story. Alternatively, it is possible to focus on the English expression knowledge and narrative ability of students in China's stories, and further test the rationality and effectiveness of OBE through quantitative research methods such as testing and questionnaire surveys.

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