

Exploration of Teaching Reform for the Course "Introduction to the Chinese National Community" under the OBE Concept

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Abstract: Strengthening the awareness of the Chinese national community is the core task of ethnic work in the new era. As a compulsory public foundational course for implementing the fundamental mission of fostering virtue through education in universities, "Introduction to the Chinese National Community" urgently needs to address practical challenges such as vague teaching objectives, rigid teaching content, monotonous teaching methods, and outdated evaluation approaches. Based on the context of the Hainan Free Trade Port construction and combined with teaching practices in vocational undergraduate colleges, this paper analyzes the theoretical connotation of the OBE concept and its intrinsic alignment with curriculum reform, integrates Hainan's local multi-ethnic cultural resources and digital teaching methods into course implementation, and promotes the unified achievement of students' knowledge acquisition, value recognition, and behavioral practice. It aims to provide practical references for similar universities to optimize the teaching of the "Introduction to the Chinese National Community" course.

1. Introduction

The "Introduction to the Chinese National Community" is a systematically compiled textbook that elaborates on General Secretary Xi's important thoughts on strengthening and improving ethnic work. Starting from 2024, it has been widely offered in universities nationwide, becoming the core vehicle for carrying out education on the Chinese national community. The course shoulders the important educational mission of guiding students to establish a correct historical view of the Chinese nation, enhance the "five recognitions," and deeply cultivate the concept of the "four shared community principles." Outcome-Based Education (OBE), which originated in the United States in the 1980s, advocates leading the entire teaching process with the learning outcomes that students ultimately achieve, implements backward design, diversified evaluation, and continuous iterative optimization, and has now been widely applied to various curriculum teaching reforms.

2. OBE Concept: The Engine of Contemporary Teaching Reform for the Course "*Introduction to the Chinese National Community*"

2.1 Origins and Analysis of the OBE Concept

OBE, or Outcome-Based Education, emerged during the wave of educational reform in the United States in the 1980s. Proposed by scholars such as Spady, the core of OBE is not the static knowledge that students memorize, but the abilities and behaviors that students can genuinely demonstrate after completing their education. It requires all components of the educational system to be organized and arranged around the pre-set learning outcomes [1]. After years of development, OBE has formed three core principles: students-center, backward design, and continuous improvement. First, students-center means that teaching activities serve entirely to achieve students' abilities and competencies, abandoning the one-way knowledge transmission model by teachers and emphasizing the activation of students' active learning. Second, backward design, unlike the traditional 'textbook–content–objective' forward logic, works by deriving teaching objectives, content, activities, and assessment tasks from expected learning outcomes. Third, continuous improvement relies on evaluation feedback to dynamically adjust all aspects of the course, forming a closed-loop mechanism of 'goals–implementation–assessment–improvement'. It can be seen that OBE breaks the traditional paradigm centered on teachers and textbooks, emphasizing the optimization of the entire teaching process driven by the final learning outcomes. Introducing it into the course "*Introduction to the Chinese National Community*" helps to shift the course focus from 'what the teacher has taught' to 'what the students have learned, recognized, and achieved,' providing a clear theoretical framework for the course reconstruction guided by the consolidation of the awareness of the Chinese national community.

2.2 The Contemporary Relevance of OBE to Curriculum Reform

Firstly, it is highly aligned with the objectives of fostering students. The course '*Introduction to the Chinese National Community*' is not only about imparting theoretical knowledge of ethnic studies but more importantly about value cultivation, enabling students to develop cognition and identification with the Chinese national community and translate this into practical behaviors. OBE expands learning outcomes from mere knowledge memorization to multiple dimensions including cognition, emotion, and behavior, transforming the abstract goal of 'strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community' into observable and assessable learning outputs, thereby addressing the issue that ideological and political education goals are often too broad and difficult to implement. Secondly, the logic of curriculum construction is highly compatible. Current curriculum construction faces the practical contradiction of limited class hours (mostly 32 hours or 2 credits) with intensive teaching tasks and substantial content. The backward design approach of OBE can select key and difficult teaching points based on talent cultivation requirements, optimize the teaching schedule within limited hours, and avoid covering too much content superficially. At the same time, the two align in terms of evaluation orientation. Traditional curricula focus on end-of-term paper-and-pencil tests, which are inadequate for assessing students' value recognition. The OBE approach, with its diversified evaluation methods, can establish a comprehensive assessment system that considers theoretical mastery, emotional identification, and practical performance, thereby promoting the transition of course evaluation from a focus on knowledge assessment to a focus on competency development.

3. Current Situation Review: The Practical Dilemmas in Teaching the *"Introduction to the Chinese National Community"* Course

3.1 Teaching Objectives: The Consideration of the Distance between Ambiguity and Precision

In some universities, the teaching objectives of this course tend to be grand and macro-level, largely remaining at the level of theoretical understanding, lacking layered, observable, and measurable detailed indicators[2]. Many lesson plans only generally propose "enhancing the awareness of the Chinese national community" or "establishing a correct view of ethnic groups," without further breaking them down into cognitive objectives, emotional identification objectives, and practical behavior objectives. On the one hand, the alignment between teaching objectives and talent cultivation objectives is insufficient, and the differentiated needs of students from different professional backgrounds in vocational undergraduate programs are not adequately considered, making it difficult for uniform objective settings to accommodate the foundational differences among students of different majors; on the other hand, objectives are detached from evaluation tasks, with many objectives remaining only in the teaching design text, unable to be translated into classroom tasks, assignment tasks, and assessment points. As a result, teachers find it difficult to judge to what extent students have achieved the "five recognitions," leading to the objectives becoming vague and the phenomenon of "objectives written in lesson plans but implemented loosely in the classroom". Over time, classroom teaching is prone to devolving into one-way theoretical instruction, making it difficult for teachers to accurately grasp the effectiveness of moral education. Students' learning lacks clear guidance, being passively limited to memorizing theoretical points, which hampers the progression from knowledge recognition to emotional identification and then to conscious practice, thereby constraining the effectiveness of fostering a strong sense of Chinese national community.

3.2 Teaching Content: The Contradiction Between Obsolescence and Innovation

Firstly, there is insufficient transformation of textbook content. Some classroom teaching rigidly follows the textbook text, simply presenting chapters in order without secondary processing of theoretical content, resulting in heavy theoretical explanation and few real-world cases. Secondly, local resources are underutilized. Hainan has rich minority historical and cultural resources, historical realities of ethnic communication and integration, and practices of ethnic unity and progress within the context of free trade port construction, but some classrooms have not effectively integrated local cases into teaching, causing a disconnect between theory and local reality. Thirdly, practical teaching content is weak. Although the course emphasizes practice-oriented education, practical activities tend to be formalistic, lacking practice tasks that closely match theoretical knowledge points, resulting in theoretical and practical teaching being like "two separate skins." Moreover, the construction of digital teaching resources is uneven, with micro-courses, case libraries, and other resources not yet systematically embedded into classrooms, making it difficult to support blended teaching. The classroom content is disconnected from the students' living environment, and theoretical explanations are difficult to evoke emotional resonance. Students are unable to use vivid local historical facts to understand the connotations of interaction, communication, and integration among various ethnic groups. As a result, theoretical learning is limited to textbook concepts and it is difficult to transform the concept of community into the cognitive ability to analyze real ethnic issues and serve local development.

3.3 Teaching Methods: The Bottleneck Constraints Between Single and Diverse Approaches

From the classroom reality, the lecture method still dominates, with teachers lecturing extensively and students insufficiently engaged in active inquiry. Due to the 32-class-hour constraint, some teachers focus on completing the teaching schedule and seldom conduct activities such as thematic discussions, scenario experiences, or case studies. Classroom interaction is relatively shallow, mostly simple Q&A, lacking in-depth reflection. The implementation effect of blended online and offline teaching is limited, with some merely providing video resources, and lacking effective linkage between online learning and offline classroom activities. The frequency of practical teaching activities, such as field visits, ethnic unity storytelling sessions, and thematic research, is not high, leaving students with a passive acquisition role and making it difficult to genuinely progress from knowledge comprehension to emotional identification. Static, didactic teaching methods make it difficult to stimulate students' empathy and critical thinking, leaving the cultivation of a sense of community at a superficial cognitive level. Students lack space for independent inquiry and dialogical reflection, preventing them from internalizing values through deep engagement, thereby making it challenging for the curriculum to achieve the integrated educational goal of nurturing knowledge, emotions, intentions, and actions.

4. Exploring Strategies: Reform Path for Curriculum Teaching Driven by the OBE Concept

4.1 Goal Reshaping: Anchoring the Teaching Compass on Outcome Orientation

The first challenge for curriculum teaching reform is addressing the problem of vague and hard-to-implement objectives[3]. According to the OBE backward design principle, teaching should no longer start directly from textbook chapters. Instead, it should focus on the educational mission of the course itself, starting from the expected learning outcomes students should achieve after completing the course. This builds a three-tier progressive course objective system of "cognition—identification—practice," breaking down the broad educational goal of strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community into clear, actionable, and measurable specific learning objectives. At the cognitive level, the focus is on solidifying students' theoretical foundation, requiring them to understand the internal logic of the diverse yet unified structure of the Chinese nation and to grasp the core meaning of the "Four Shared" and "Four Together." Based on cognition, the identification level aims to elevate students' emotional and value perspectives, fostering the deepening of the "Five Identifications." Finally, the practice level encourages translating thought into action, guiding students to turn community consciousness into daily behaviors, respecting the excellent cultures of all ethnic groups, and consciously maintaining national unity in learning and life.

4.2 Content Reconstruction: Building a Multi-Integrated Teaching Layout

Once teaching objectives are set, teaching content must closely align with expected learning outcomes, selecting and reorganizing content instead of merely following textbooks or repeating textbook chapters, effectively transforming the teaching from a textbook system to a classroom-based system. First, theoretical teaching content is modularized. Considering this course has 2 credits and a total of 32 lecture hours, teaching modules are divided around themes such as the historical evolution of multi-ethnic unity, the construction of the Chinese cultural community, the advantages of China's ethnic work system, practices in ethnic work in the new era, and current inter-ethnic interactions in Hainan. This involves rational selection and prioritization of textbook content to identify focus areas, avoiding superficial coverage. Second, local teaching resources are

fully utilized. Hainan has a rich heritage of minority cultures and examples of ethnic unity and progress. By relying on existing teaching bases like the Hainan Provincial Annals Museum and Zhongkai Village, a localized teaching case database can be formed. With small-scale examples explaining larger principles, and through lively local history and real-life stories, the grand theory of the Chinese national community can be made tangible to students.

4.3 Method Innovation: Stimulating the Teaching Vitality of Active Participation

The implementation of teaching content is inseparable from the support of teaching methods. To realize the core requirement of students-center in the OBE concept, it is necessary to move away from the traditional teacher-centered, lecture-focused approach and, through diversified teaching methods, mobilize students' initiative, shifting them from passive knowledge reception to active thinking and independent construction of value cognition. In offline classrooms, while retaining the foundation of thematic lectures, various forms such as case teaching, classroom discussions, and situational teaching are organically integrated. For challenging and important course topics, thought-provoking classroom issues are set up, organizing students into groups for discussion and guiding them to actively analyze various erroneous viewpoints, thereby cultivating independent thinking and the ability to discern right from wrong. Relying on classroom platforms, activities such as "Home-themed Ideological and Political Lessons" and Ethnic Unity Story Sessions are conducted, encouraging students to share learning insights based on their own experiences, enhancing classroom engagement. On this basis, digital blended teaching is promoted, using smart teaching platforms like Rain Classroom to connect pre-class, in-class, and post-class learning: micro-lessons and extended reading materials are pushed before class, enabling students to complete independent preparation of basic content; in class, simple knowledge points are no longer repeated, and exploration and dialogue focus on key and difficult issues; after class, extended assignments are given to consolidate learning outcomes, achieving mutual support between online and offline teaching.

5. Conclusion

The course "*Introduction to the Chinese National Community*" is a key vehicle for educating university students in the new era to strengthen their awareness of the Chinese national community. It is not merely a platform for transmitting knowledge about ethnic theory, ethnic policy, and the history and culture of the Chinese nation, but also a core channel for helping students develop a correct understanding of the country, the nation, history, culture, and religion. By studying this course, students can deepen their understanding of the pluralistic and integrated pattern of the Chinese nation, enhance the "five identifications"—identification with the great motherland, the Chinese nation, Chinese culture, and socialism with Chinese characteristics—and more consciously forge a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation.

In response to the practical challenges encountered in course development, the introduction of the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) concept provides a feasible path for curriculum reform. These challenges include, for example, an insufficiently clear correspondence between course objectives and graduation requirements, insufficient integration of teaching content with the learning conditions of different universities and local realities, relatively limited teaching methods, inadequate practical teaching resources, and assessment methods that struggle to measure students' value identification and behavioral development effectively. OBE emphasizes a student-centered approach, learning outcomes as the orientation, and continuous improvement as the guarantee. It requires reverse design of course objectives, teaching content, and evaluation methods, so that curriculum development can focus more clearly on the knowledge, abilities, and values students

should ultimately possess.

Of course, the application of the OBE concept in this course is still in the exploratory stage, and a mature and unified model has not yet been formed. Going forward, it will be necessary to further refine the observable indicators of course objectives in accordance with the learning conditions of different types of universities, optimize the development of local teaching resources, improve the continuous improvement mechanism, and consistently enhance the educational quality of the “*Introduction to the Chinese National Community*” course, better serving the contemporary mission of strengthening awareness of the Chinese national community. In particular, course objectives should be made more observable and measurable; local teaching resources should be developed and integrated more effectively; and an “evaluation–feedback–improvement” cycle should be established to ensure that teaching reform produces real results.

At the same time, efforts should be continuously made to strengthen teachers’ teaching capabilities, promote the ongoing transformation of teaching reform achievements into educational effectiveness, guide young students to consciously establish the concept of community, and actively take on the modern responsibilities of maintaining national unity and promoting the development of ethnic regions. Teachers should improve their theoretical understanding, teaching competence, and practical guidance capacity. Teaching reform should not remain at the level of documents or pilot projects but should be transformed into classroom practice and educational outcomes. Young students should be guided to establish a community concept of sharing weal and woe, honor and disgrace, life and death, and destiny, and to take on the contemporary responsibility of safeguarding national unity, promoting ethnic unity, and advancing the development of ethnic regions.

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