

Reflections on the Teaching of English Listening Based on Obe (Outcome Based Education)

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Keywords: Obe, English Teaching, Listening Course

Abstract: Obe (outcome based education) provides new guidance for teaching activities, with outcome being the ultimate goal and orientation for setting teaching objectives, devising teaching system and evaluating teaching effects. With an aim to improve students' listening ability, obe concept has been adopted in the English listening course. Interior and exterior needs are taken into consideration in the course objectives design. The teaching process is to be tailored to achieve the objectives. In evaluation, multiple means are included to guarantee teaching outcome.

1. Introduction

There is no universal standard for measuring the success of students. It is essential to set reasonable standards that students must reach before they graduate. In universities, students are required to take certain courses and earn certain credits in order to graduate. Presently, students from different universities can have very different standards to meet.

OBE, Outcome Based Education, offers an opportunity to set standards with regard to the competence students need to acquire in order to be qualified for future employment. It attaches great importance to the outcome of education. OBE was proposed by Spady William in the year of 1994. It emphasizes the outcome of education so that all teaching activities are to be centered around the expected outcome. It is different from traditional teaching theories in that it takes outcome as important guidance for setting teaching objectives, designing teaching process and evaluating teaching outcome. In practice, interior and exterior needs are taken into consideration in course objectives design. Teachers need to adopt different teaching strategies in order to achieve the goals and multiple evaluation is necessary to guarantee teaching effect. OBE concept has been introduced to the English listening course.

2. Curriculum Design Oriented by Obe

Learning outcome represents the competence structure that is primarily realized through the learning of the courses in the curriculum. Therefore, the design of the curriculum system is particularly important in achieving desired learning outcome. It needs to match the competence structure. Each skill should be supported by a clear objective in the courses. In other words, each course in the curriculum system is supposed to make a definite contribution to the realization of the competence structure. This curriculum system requires students to have the expected ability after completing the courses in the curriculum system. If any part of the system doesn't contribute to the development of students' particular abilities, it has to be revised.

At the very beginning of the teaching process, the outcome is to be defined. It takes into account both the needs of the educational system itself and those of society and related enterprises. The teaching activities are aimed at meeting the needs of society, especially the needs of potential employers. The interior and exterior needs are the basis for designing curriculum.

3. Objectives of the English Listening Course Based on Obe

As far as the English listening course is concerned, the elements mentioned above should also be considered in the teaching objective.

The ultimate goal of the English listening course is to help students develop their English listening ability to achieve the goal of language proficiency in future jobs. The training of English listening is based on students' learning objectives and the professional development needs. Take for instance the students majoring in tourism English. They are supposed to acquaint themselves with expressions in a hotel or a travel agency. They need to communicate with others in English with proficiency. Good listening ability is a must. Effective and professional communication in English can be an advantage in cross-cultural international communication and an important guarantee for their success in their future career.

The objectives of the course should also include solving problems in specific situation. Students learn more in solving problems. They can come up with a solution to the problem in simulated work situation. Being one the most effective ways to improve English listening ability, problem solving prepares students for effective cross-cultural communication in the future.

The specific teaching objectives of the course can keep students to be fully aware of their goals and inspire them to work hard to acquire practical language skills. Students should take them as an important guide for their learning in the course.

4. Teaching Model of the English Listening Course Based on Obe

Oriented by OBE, the objectives of the English listening course serve as guidance for the teaching process. Achieving the desired outcome relies on constructing scientific curriculum system and adopting suitable teaching strategies. In accordance with the OBE concept, the education system should be organized to focus all teaching activities on the objectives. This is to ensure that students gain experiences that will lead to substantial success in their future lives. Teaching outcomes should be emphasized in the whole teaching process and the teaching process should be consistent with the teaching objectives. The teaching objectives regulate the behavior of teachers and students in the classroom, which will help improve the quality and effect of the teaching.

There is no single specified style of teaching in the OBE theory. Teachers will have to embrace the differences between students, adjust teaching strategies and optimize educational resources to help students achieve the specified outcome.

4.1 Developing Personalized Teaching

According to the OBE concept, individual differences between students should be fully considered in curriculum design and teaching activities to ensure that every student has the opportunity to achieve learning results. Therefore, it calls for personalized teaching.

Instead of giving all students the same learning opportunities at the same time in the same way, personalized teaching enables teachers to adopt a more flexible approach to meet students' individual needs, giving students the opportunity to achieve their learning results. The teaching objectives are determined by the needs of students' development. The teaching content is designed according to students' needs. Teachers and other supporting personnel should jointly help students achieve the desired goals. The focus of evaluation is students' learning effect and performance. In personalized teaching, students are the subject of the teaching activities.

Personalized teaching requires teachers to know the different requirements, make different teaching plans and provide different learning opportunities for different students.

4.2 Determining Teaching Strategies

In determining teaching strategies, OBE places particular emphasis on what students learn rather than what teachers teach and on the outputs of the teaching process rather than its inputs. OBE requires students to develop their abilities through such challenging tasks as notetaking and simulated interpretation. Such tasks demand the abilities not only in listening, but also in thinking and expressing. Students are put in simulated workplace. OBE focuses more on higher-level skills such as the ability of creative thinking and the ability to analyze and synthesize information. These abilities can be acquired by performing some of the more complex tasks in a team.

Teachers can further attain the teaching goals of the English listening course through innovative

teaching models, which are not only limited to improving students' English listening, but also link students' learning skills with their social practice so that students' English learning is practical in the future career.

4.3 Integrating Teaching Resources

Under the guidance of OBE, teachers should optimize the existing teaching resources as much as possible. Teaching Materials for the English listening course are supposed to support the objectives of the course. And they should be tailored to suit the needs and professional development of students. Teachers should be equipped with adequate professional knowledge and experience in related industries. In preparing English listening resources, teachers should not only follow the general guidance of syllabus, but also select those that best meet the specific needs.

In the course of teaching, the activities should be based on certain situation to increase exchanges between students and to solve the problems in communication. At the same time, teachers should give timely and effective feedback to students for further improvement in English listening.

The teaching of the English listening course has to match students' learning goals. Therefore, the resources for the listening course should focus on students' vision for their professional development and reflect the requirement of the outcomes. Teachers should integrate different teaching resources according to the teaching objectives of the course to ensure that students can meet professional requirements and keep enthusiasm and confidence in the course.

4.4 Evaluating Learning Outcomes

There is no single specified style of teaching, nor is there any single style of assessment in the OBE theory. OBE measures what students can do, not what they know. It requires students to solve open problem. It focuses on learning outcome rather than teaching content.

Uniform minimum standards for performance of objectively measurable skills must be achieved early in students' school careers. Advanced standards should not be uniform, but broader and more flexible. Yet they must still be objective standards. This is what OBE should be. OBE emphasizes personalized assessment, which should be formulated and conducted according to individual differences between students.

In the English listening course, multiple and hierarchical evaluation criteria are adopted. The evaluation emphasizes achieving learning results and individual learning progress.

OBE helps bridge the gap between class and workplace. It gives great weight to the competence required of students in their future career. The teaching process of the English listening course should embrace students' diversity and help them acquire the expected abilities. Multiple evaluation serves as a safeguard for the teaching process. All these are sure to help students develop their ability for their future success.

Acknowledgment

Research and practice of English listening teaching method based on OBE concept, Project No.: jj2019y019.

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