

Construction of the Second Classroom System for Foreign Language Majors Based on OBE Concept

Jun Zhang*, Jianzheng Jiang, Xinglei Li, Hao Fu, Mingfeng Yang

School of Foreign Languages, Sichuan Normal University, Chengdu, Sichuan, China.

How to cite this paper: Jun Zhang, Jianzheng Jiang, Xinglei Li, Hao Fu, Mingfeng Yang. (2024). Construction of the Second Classroom System for Foreign Language Majors Based on OBE Concept. *The Educational Review, USA*, 8(5), 739-742. DOI: 10.26855/er.2024.05.017

Received: April 12, 2024

Accepted: May 9, 2024

Published: June 7, 2024

Corresponding author: Jun Zhang, School of Foreign Languages, Sichuan Normal University, Chengdu, Sichuan, China.

Abstract

The second classroom plays an important role in the cultivation of foreign language professionals at the current time. The OBE concept is result oriented, student-centered, and emphasizes the improvement of abilities, which is in line with the goal of cultivating foreign language professionals. The article will be based on the OBE concept to analyze the current situation and existing problems in the construction of the second classroom system for foreign language majors. Finally, from the perspective of top-level design, resource integration, group collaboration, disciplinary characteristics, and evaluation system, the article will propose a path to strengthen top-level design and emphasize ideological and political education. It aims to promote coordination and systematically serve educational needs, leverage the advantages of universities to support goal achievement, optimize the evaluation system, and stimulate educational potential for the construction of the second classroom for foreign language majors in universities from the perspective of the OBE concept.

Keywords

OBE concept, the second classroom, foreign language professionals

Foreign language majors are of great significance in enhancing China's international communication and influence, promoting cultural exchange and mutual learning between China and foreign countries. Foreign language majors in universities are actively responding to the needs of the country's international communication capacity construction, comprehensively strengthening cross-cultural education, and cultivating new era international foreign language talents with patriotism, global perspective, and professional skills. In 1994, William (Arlington, 1994) proposed the Output Based Education (OBE) concept, which takes output-oriented, student-centered, and continuous improvement as educational connotations and elements. After more than 30 years of exploration and application, it has formed a relatively systematic educational theory system. In this context, how to use the OBE concept to build a second classroom activity and improve the quality of foreign language talent cultivation in colleges and universities has important practical significance for the implementation of efforts to cultivate more complex talents with family feelings, global vision, and professional skills.

1. Current research status and existing problems

1.1 research status

The term 'second classroom' first appeared in the 1983 publication of 'Higher Education Management' in China (Zhu

Jiusi, Cai Keyong, & Yao Qihe, 1983). Its definition is based on the first classroom, referring to various meaningful political, intellectual, and fitness activities that guide and organize students outside of the teaching plan. The current education community generally believes that the second classroom and the first classroom jointly build a sound overall framework for university education (Peng Qiaoyin, 2011, pp. 147-148). Educators have conducted a series of studies from the perspectives of the evaluation methods (Wei Jing, Jia Xi, & Liu Dong, 2018), construction models (Dong Xia, 2018), and optimization measures (Wang Ru, 2020) of the second classroom, in order to improve the collaborative education effect of the first classroom and the second classroom.

After the introduction of the OBE concept in China, many educators began to explore its application in talent cultivation in higher education in China and attempted to extend the OBE concept, which originated from the engineering major to the second classroom of majors such as humanities and social sciences. In the field of engineering education, based on the OBE concept, a second classroom activity is proposed to be designed around three aspects: moral education, graduation requirements, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms, covering ideological and political education, scientific and technological innovation and entrepreneurship, skill training, social practice volunteer services, and quality expansion; Some educators believe that building a second classroom education system based on the OBE concept is of great significance for achieving the integration of professional and industrial, pre-service and post-service integration, and constructing corresponding activity systems around the four dimensions of curriculum goals, organization, evaluation, and content (Zhao Min & Yang Lingling, 2023, pp. 1-6).

1.2 Existing problems

Many scholars have applied the OBE concept to the second classroom of universities and achieved good results, but there are still some shortcomings.

(1) Insufficient emphasis. Firstly, the second classroom itself lacks sufficient emphasis. The traditional educational concept believes that the first classroom is the main place for educating students, while the second classroom is only for extracurricular activities and has a negative impact on the first classroom. In fact, the two classrooms promote each other. The first classroom mainly teaches students professional theoretical knowledge, while the second classroom provides students with a practical platform. Through combining theoretical knowledge with practical practice, students form a spiral learning mode of 'theory-practice-theory'; secondly, the OBE concept is not given enough attention in the field of humanities and social sciences. The OBE concept itself originated in the field of engineering education, and its 'output orientation' aims to guide universities in cultivating students with the ability to solve practical problems from the social demand side. However, its role in moral education is not given enough attention.

(2) The effect is not obvious. Firstly, the OBE concept, as an imported product, is not widely and deeply applied in foreign language education. The combination of the OBE concept with the cultivation of socialist foreign language talents with Chinese characteristics, such as patriotism, international perspective, and professional skills, is not yet close enough; secondly, the design of the second classroom content cannot keep up with the times and meet the developmental needs of students. For example, the current 'Foreign Language+X Discipline' talent cultivation model is proposed, and a few universities rely on the characteristics of the school to create good talent cultivation models such as 'Foreign Language+Diplomat', 'Foreign Language+Economics and Trade', and 'Foreign Language+Teacher Education'; However, some universities lack a composite teaching staff and school characteristics of 'foreign language+X subject', and have not formed a deep learning of professional content, even alienated into an 'X subject+foreign language' model, weakening the dominant position of foreign language majors.

(3) Inadequate standardization of the second classroom system. Firstly, the educational content is messy: the second lesson lacks clear teaching objectives, the guiding function of ideological and political education is weakened, and there is a lack of professional guidance in activities; secondly, uneven implementation departments: insufficient coordination among various departments in universities, and activities are prone to repetition; the uncertainty of time and space in the second classroom can also to some extent affect students' participation enthusiasm.

(4) The evaluation mechanism is not scientific. For students, the analytical evaluation system adopted by most universities divides the comprehensive qualities exhibited by students in the first and second classrooms into several indicators such as academic performance, and ideological and moral character, and assigns scores to each indicator. Individual differences and subjectivity in ratings will restrain students from growing outside the evaluation system and affect their overall development; This evaluation that emphasizes results over processes will also excessively guide students to pursue second-classroom assessment scores and participate in activities that are meaningless for their own development. For teachers, the evaluation of professional titles is less related to the effectiveness of second-classroom education, and the enthusiasm of full-time teachers to participate in second-classroom education is not high.

2. The connotation and significance of constructing the second classroom system for foreign language majors based on the OBE concept

2.1 Connotation

The ‘output-oriented’ concept in OBE can be divided into three levels: training objectives, graduation objectives, and curriculum objectives. Graduation objectives and curriculum objectives are hard indicators that students must complete during their time in school, while training objectives are the development expectations of students, which are unified in the organic combination of personal needs, social needs, and historical needs. The OBE concept of ‘student-centered, continuous improvement’ requires that students be placed in the most important position as the subject of education while meeting their graduation goals, and fully considering their subjective and objective needs to design a second classroom; At the same time, it emphasizes dynamic adjustment and continuous improvement based on the learning situation of students and the actual needs of society. The ‘second classroom’ of foreign language majors, as an extension of the first classroom, is an important battlefield for cultivating morality and talent in universities. The second classroom does not have a fixed teaching location, content, goals, and outline. If there is no scientific concept to guide the design of second classroom activities, it will be difficult to effectively play the collaborative educational role between the second classroom and the first classroom, let alone guide students to combine their personal needs with the needs of national and social development. Building a second classroom activity system for foreign language majors based on the OBE concept is an important measure to solve this problem.

2.2 Significance

(1) Effective measures to implement the fundamental task of cultivating virtue and nurturing talents. ‘For whom to cultivate people, what kind of people to cultivate, and how to cultivate them’ is a fundamental issue in education. It is in a major change that has not been seen in a century, and the security risks in the domestic ideological field have increased. It is crucial to integrate ideological and political education work throughout the entire process of higher education and teaching. Based on the OBE concept, cultivating ‘young people who are both red and professional’ and ‘capable of shouldering the responsibility of national rejuvenation in the new era’ will be taken as the output orientation, and reversing the design of second classroom activities will help universities better cultivate morality and talents.

(2) Effective paths to improve the quality of student training. Firstly, improving students' social adaptability. The current global economic development is slowing down, and the domestic employment situation is severe. Based on the OBE concept, a second classroom system for foreign language majors is being constructed to match the supply and demand sides of talent cultivation. It helps universities design second classrooms and cultivate students in an ‘order-based’ manner according to social reality, industry development trends, and government macro policies. College students can have a clear understanding of their learning goals after enrollment, making it easier for them to grow into talents that meet the needs of society, which helps to effectively implement the employment priority strategy at the level of university education; secondly, enhancing students' subjective initiative in learning. The cognitive intrinsic drive is the internal drive that stimulates stable and lasting learning motivation in students, which needs to be continuously consolidated through practice. The OBE second classroom provides students with a practical platform, where they can consolidate their cognitive intrinsic drive through continuous practice and cultivate their lifelong learning awareness; In addition, unlike the strong constraint of the first classroom on students, students have more autonomy in learning in the second classroom.

3. Strategies for building a second classroom system for foreign language majors based on OBE Concept

Based on the OBE concept, the construction of the second classroom system for foreign language majors takes the Party and country's education of talents, national policy macro-orientation, and social practical needs as the output orientation from the perspective of talent demand, reverses design student training goals, graduation goals, and course objectives, and constructs the OBE second classroom for foreign language majors. The OBE second classroom and training objectives are dynamically adjusted based on the feedback on the effectiveness of education until a dynamic balance is achieved.

3.1 Strengthening top-level design and highlighting ideological and political education

Chinese socialist higher education with Chinese characteristics is rooted in the land of China, cultivating qualified socialist successors, and solving the problem of who trains people and how to cultivate them. The socialist core values are the value guidance for students in the new era, and also the key to the construction of the second classroom system for foreign

language majors based on the OBE concept. When designing the second OBE classroom, a series of lectures on the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, visits to red bases, and visits to revolutionary old areas, can be conducted, and advanced models can be invited to give presentations to highlight political guidance for students.

3.2 Promoting coordination and servicing education needs systematically

The construction of the second classroom system for foreign language majors based on the OBE concept involves multiple functional departments in universities, which can be divided into course management department, course communication department, and course implementation department according to their functions. The curriculum communication department, as a bridge connecting schools and society, directly faces the front line of social production and can quickly and accurately perceive the dynamic talent needs of society. It can be used as the design basis for the second classroom system of OBE foreign language majors. On the one hand, the department needs to conduct timely research and understand the needs of individual employers, and dynamically track the employment quality of graduates; On the other hand, it is necessary to provide feedback on the evaluation of employers and the work situation of graduating students to the school, and adjust the student training goals accordingly. The curriculum communication department is generally undertaken by the functional department responsible for employment, the curriculum management department is mainly composed of the Academic Affairs Office, Youth League Committee, and Student Affairs Department, and the curriculum implementation department is generally composed of teachers, counselors, and student clubs.

3.3 Leveraging the advantages of universities and supporting the achievement of goals

In order to better leverage the unique role of the foreign language discipline and consolidate its subjectivity and foothold, many universities have begun to try 'foreign language+' teaching activities to support students to become 'composite talents with professional skills' and serve major national strategies, combining foreign languages with their own characteristics, such as 'foreign language+teacher training', 'foreign language+audit', and 'foreign language+law'.

3.4 Optimizing evaluation system and stimulating educational potential

The evaluation subject of the second classroom system for foreign language majors based on the OBE concept should be all parties involved in talent cultivation, including teachers, students, employers, and graduates; the evaluation object at the school level should be the learning outcomes and outputs mainly based on teaching content, objectives, methods, and results, while the evaluation object at the social level should be whether graduates meet social needs; the evaluation indicators should be assigned appropriate weights based on the size of the influencing factors, according to the evaluation content and object settings.

References

- Dong Xia. Exploration of the Construction Model of the Second Classroom of Public English in Universities under the Concept of Smart Teaching [J]. *Campus English*, 2018 (6): 18-19.
- Peng Qiaoyin. Exploration and Reflection on the Construction of Second Classroom Curriculum in Universities [J]. *Education and Career*, 2011 (5): 147-148.
- SPADY W. D. Output Based Education: Critical Issues and Answers [M]. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators, 1994:1-10.
- Wang Ru. Exploring the Collaborative Education Path of the Second and First Classrooms in Universities under the Concept of "Three Comprehensive Education". *Research on the Communist Youth League in Universities*, 2020 (Z2): 237-241.
- Wei Jing, Jia Xi, Liu Dong. Comprehensive Quality Evaluation of College Students with the Goal of Promoting Development: Concept and Practice of Second Classroom Transcript Construction [J]. *China Electronic Education*, 2018 (9): 132-137.
- Zhao Min, Yang Lingling. Construction of a Curriculum based System for Second Classroom Activities Based on OBE Concept [J]. *Journal of Qilu Normal University*, 2023 (38): 1-6.
- Zhu Jiushi, Cai Keyong, Yao Qihe. Management of Higher Education Institutions [M]. Wuhan: Huazhong University of Technology Press, 1983.