

“Student-Centered” OBE-PAD Teaching Model and Practices

—The Case of International Business Communication Course

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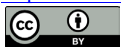
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Abstract

Focusing on teacher’s leading role, traditional teaching model has limited effect on students’ self-learning ability improvement, practical ability promotion, and innovation consciousness cultivation. Taking international business communication course as an example, the study puts forward “student-centered” teaching model based on OBE-PAD concept, and forms a “three-trinity” teaching activity system with teacher-centered teaching process, student-centered expansion process, and achievement-oriented assessment process. Recent five years teaching practices of the international business communication course show that the OBE-PAD model can effectively improve the teaching level of international business communication and the students’ international business communication practices, which is conducive to improving the quality of professional talents training.

Keywords

OBE Concept, PAD Model, Student-Centered Teaching Model, Teaching Practices

1. Introduction

First proposed by Spady, an American scholar, Outcome Based Education (OBE) focused on students and focuses on learning results (Spady, 1994), which continuously improves teaching design according to students’ learning feedback and is quickly recognized by the education community (Fan et al., 2019). Since June 2013, China has been accepted as a signatory of the Washington Agreement, and engineering education has become an important part of China’s higher education (Fan, 2020). OBE concept presents three characteristics: achievement oriented,

student-centered, and continuous improvement (Su & Li, 2018). the implementation of OBE needs to meet three assumptions (Li et al., 2019): 1) All students can succeed, and the successes are different in the time and the manner; 2) Good learning style will encourage students to achieve greater success; 3) To a certain extent, teachers determine whether students can achieve success and play a key role in teaching (Liu et al., 2016).

Presentation Assimilation Discussion (PAD) theory was proposed in year 2014 by Professor Zhang, and the core idea of this theory is to allocate half of the classroom time to teachers and the other half to students for discussion, integrating the two concepts of “student-centered” and “Teacher centered” (Zhang, 2014). In this way, by redefining the classroom and reshaping the teacher-student relationship, the advantages of many teaching methods such as flipped classroom teaching, autonomous classroom teaching, efficient classroom teaching, project-based teaching, and case study can be integrated (Li et al., 2020). PAD theory assessment focuses on process evaluation (Qiu, 2016).

Integrating the concepts of OBE and PAD, focusing on students’ achievement and ability-structure, PAD model transforms students from knowledge receivers to knowledge and ability presenters, and strengthens the construction of independent knowledge (Liu, 2019), both of which are teaching objectives and teaching means, and both regard students as the main body of learning and attach importance to the diversity of process assessment and achievement evaluation. The integration of the two can act as the complement of each other (Sun et al., 2022).

International business communication is a core professional course to improve the core competence of international business communication and cultivate high-quality application-oriented talents in the field of international business. However, in the traditional teaching, teachers give priority to teaching. The current teaching practice shows that the traditional teaching method has limited effect on the stimulation of students’ thirst for knowledge, the improvement of independent learning ability, the cultivation of innovation consciousness and the improvement of practical ability. In order to improve students’ participation and stimulate students’ initiative in learning, PAD teaching model is adopted under the concept of OBE. The study focused on the student-centered OBE-PAD teaching model and teaching reform practice in terms of OBE-PAD teaching model design, implementation, and effect evaluation, explores the practical teaching effect of OBE-PAD concept, and deepens the training of high-level applied talents in economics and management.

2. Teaching Model of International Business Communication Based on OBE-PAD Concept

Guided by the students’ learning results and based on the students’ learning needs, through the interaction between teaching and learning in the three links of pre class, in class and after class, we can accurately grasp the dynamics of students’ independent learning and improve the teaching effect. In the pre class

stage, teachers analyze the effect of students' self-regulated learning before class through the platform data, and adjust the theoretical system construction and key and difficult points setting of the in class stage; During the class, the task setting is adjusted through the completion of the students' expanded tasks, and continuous improvement is made to imperceptibly improve the students' independent learning ability and innovation ability, shape the students' core values, and adjust the arrangement of independent learning tasks after class based on the completion of the students' expanded tasks; After class, the teacher adjusts and sets the pre class autonomous learning task of the next unit through the analysis of relevant data on the completion of the students' autonomous learning task after class. The whole teaching process forms a closed-loop form of "student-centered" and realizes the continuous improvement of "student-centered". Thus, the teaching model of international business communication course based on OBE-PAD concept is shown in **Figure 1**.

Obviously, in the OBE-PAD teaching model of international business communication course, "Teacher centered teaching process", "student centered development process" and "achievement-oriented assessment process" have been the key factors affecting the teaching quality of this course. The specific requirements are as follows:

2.1. Teacher-Centered Teaching Process

It is important to design the teaching process scientifically and reasonably, to make full use of the two in class links of teachers' teaching and students'

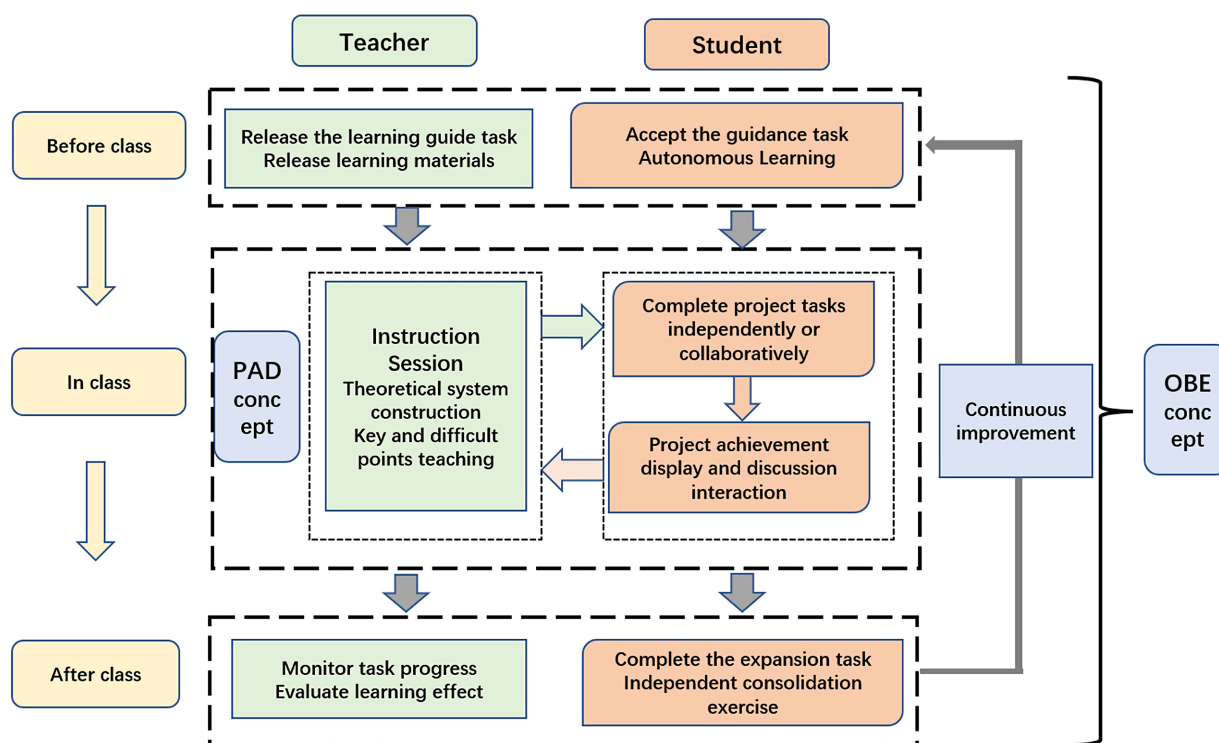


Figure 1. Teaching model of international business communication based on OBE-PAD concept.

development, and to supplement them through pre class and post class links in the teaching process. While imparting knowledge, guide students to learn independently, cultivate students' problem awareness, and embed practical ability and values into the teaching process. The key points of this link are as follows:

1) Construction of the theoretical system of the unit. Let students master the basic ideas, knowledge structure and basic concepts of the unit, to facilitate the rapid establishment of subsequent concepts and theories;

2) Analysis of key and difficult points in this unit. Analyze the "difficulties" of key and difficult problems, guide students to think and find solutions, and finally understand and master them. For the analysis of important and difficult contents, teachers need to be logical and detailed;

3) Situational teaching. By adopting diversified teaching methods such as role-playing method, project teaching method, situational teaching method and real trade experience method, students will be substituted into the import and export trade process, project investigation and report analysis, demonstration process, daily international business communication process, international business copy creation process, etc. in the real international business communication. Through specific business communication practice, all knowledge points of the unit will be connected.

2.2. Student-Centered Expansion Process

Through the above teaching links, students have basically mastered the theoretical system and key points of the unit, and then students are supposed to complete two tasks in this session:

1) Teachers divide and condense the knowledge content into small units, and students learn small-units knowledge through flipping class;

2) Teachers arrange the comprehensive development tasks of the unit in a situational manner. Through various situations, projects, roles, etc., the students will be substituted into the real workplace environment. At the same time, through consistent design, the knowledge points between and within each unit will be connected, to effectively stimulate the students' learning interest and self-learning consciousness. Through various environments, the students' practical ability will be implicitly improved and the core values will be shaped. Students complete the task and complete the task report in the form of PPT.

2.3. Achievement-Oriented Assessment Process

According to the weight proportion of each preset assessment method to the evaluation of the achievement of the course objectives, the completion of each course objective is calculated, form a report on the achievement of the course objectives and the degree of achievement of the graduation requirements, and then form a closed-loop feedback to guide the continuous improvement of the teaching contents and activities in the next academic year, and guide the continuous improvement of the course objectives and the continuous improvement

of the professional graduation requirements.

The assessment process is integrated with teacher-centered teaching process and student-centered expansion process. Assess students' mastery of theoretical knowledge through on-class quiz and discussion; in the student-centered development process, the role-playing, project teaching, situational teaching, real trade experience and other diversified methods are adopted to assess the students' ability to analyze and solve international business communication problems. The assessment should be challenging so that students can give full play to their potentials.

It can be seen that the teaching model of international business communication course based on OBE-PAD concept has the following characteristics: 1) Organization of teaching activities based on results; 2) Taking students as the major role to enhance students' self-efficacy; 3) Continuous evaluation feedback-improvement mechanism. This teaching model will fundamentally improve students' application ability to meet the talent training needs of future international business communication development.

3. Teaching Practices of International Business Communication Based on OBE-PAD Concept

Taking the course of international business communication as the case, the teaching practice of student-centered model based on OBE-PAD concept could be summarized as a teaching system, which includes objectives and positioning of the course, the teaching process of student-centered model based on OBE-PAD concept and the evaluation of teaching effects.

3.1. Objectives and Positioning of International Business Communication Course

The training plan is set according to the training objectives of international business talents, and the professional training requirements are integrated into 12 items. The index points are decomposed for each requirement, and the "knowledge-ability-achievement matrix" of the course is planned.

According to the graduation requirements of the major, the objectives of the international business communication can be condensed into following four aspects:

1) Communication Knowledge: Be familiar with primary principles and prevailing practices of international business and trade activities, including effective writing skills for international business communications, international trade communications, basic international business messages, proposals and reports, and employment communications.

2) Communication Ability: Be able to write standardized business letters and other messages, including business letter writing in the major steps of import and export activities, basic international business messages, proposals and reports, employment communication messages with good English skills.

3) Comprehensive Application: Be able to comprehensively apply internation-

al communication messages-writing and oral-presentation skills and strategies to communicate effectively with international clients in English context.

4) International Vision: Be able to demonstrate an international vision and the awareness of cross-cultural communication in the diverse cultural context during international communication process.

The supporting relationship and the correlation between the course objectives and professional graduation requirements are shown in **Table 1**.

3.2. Teaching Practice of International Business Communication Course

In the process of teaching implementation, pre-test exercises are set up through the “cloud class” teaching platform before class, to understand the students’ grasp of the learned knowledge according to the students’ answers in real time, and explain the knowledge points used or related to this class in a focused manner. According to the pre-test exercises and the questions raised, the detailed and measurable learning objectives of this lesson can be drawn up, so that students can understand the contents that need to be mastered in this lesson. Students can participate in the learning through guidance, questions, group discussion, representative answers, uploading answers, etc., and teachers’ comments or students’ mutual comments on the answers submitted or answered by students. Students’ learning achievement can be assessed through the post-test, Adjust the teaching content in time according to the students’ feedback.

In the teaching process, based on the pre-test practice results of the “cloud class” platform, key problems are elaborated in combination with specific examples, and practice tasks are sent through the teaching platform to scientifically guide students to actively learn; Based on the content elaborated by teachers, students complete the practical tasks of business communication (role-playing tasks, project completion tasks, situation simulation tasks, real trade experience tasks, etc.), complete the letter writing, project investigation and report analysis, demonstration, daily international business communication copy creation, etc.

Table 1. The supporting relationship & correlation.

Requirement for graduation	Indicators for Graduation	Course Objective	Weight Coefficient of This Course
3. Business Operation	Indicator Point 3-1: Be familiar with the import and export business process and be able to master basic skills for import and export activities.	Course Objectives 1	40%
5. Business Communications	Indicator 5-1: Be able to write standardized business letters and other messages with good English writing skills.	Course Objectives 2	70%
5. Business Communications	Indicator 5-2: Be able to communicate effectively with international clients.	Course Objectives 3	60%
9. International Vision	Indicator 9-1: Demonstrate an international vision and the awareness of cross-cultural communication.	Course Objectives 4	30%

in the real international business communication, and cultivate the students' practical ability, independent learning ability, innovation ability and core values. Through the display, discussion and communication of task results, students would feedback the results the expansion tasks to the teachers (as seen in **Figure 2**).

Finally, the knowledge points of the section are summarized and the after-class homework is extended. According to the learning situation data of the "cloud class" platform, hierarchical teaching is adopted to redistribute learning tasks to students who fail to meet the standards (set a threshold, such as 80%, and the proportion of homework achievement in class or after class to the total score), and finally achieve the teaching objectives. In combination with Tencent conference, WeChat, and other platforms, online and offline multi-channel communication and guidance channels could be built.

3.3. Teaching Effects of International Business Communication Course

As shown in **Table 2**, adopting the teaching model described in this paper can effectively improve the teaching level of international business communication course, significantly improve students' ability to master knowledge, and have good teaching effect.

The teaching results pay more attention to the process evaluation, and the interactive links of students' classroom discussion, classroom situation connection, project completion, role play, homework and other related courses are included in the process assessment. The final examination and the usual scores account for 50%. Under the condition that the test papers are of the same difficulty and the assessment methods are the same, the final scores of the nearly four years (with and without the OBE-PAD teaching model) are compared and analyzed.

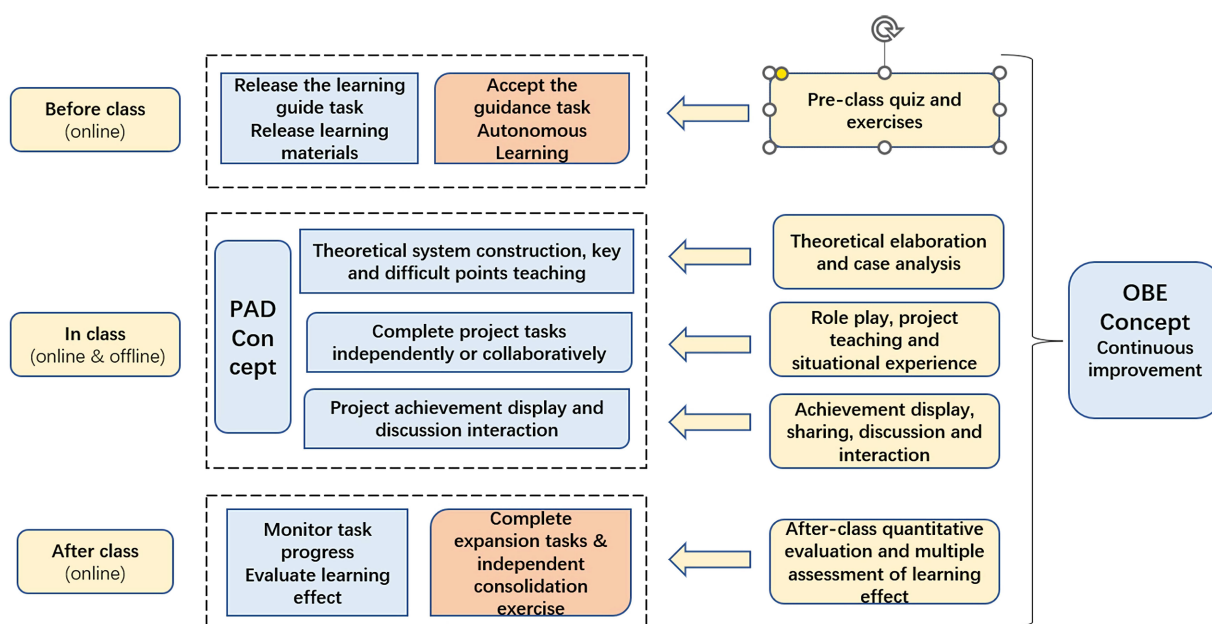


Figure 2. Teaching practices of international business communication based on OBE-PAD concept.

Table 2. 2017-2022 International business communication course results.

Semester	Teaching model	Students number	Final evaluation of the course (Grading)					Average
			Above 90	81 - 90	71 - 80	61 - 70	Under 60	
2017-2018	Traditional	79	3	12	35	18	11	69.55
2018-2019	Traditional	85	7	11	34	20	13	72.58
2019-2020	OBE-PAD	97	13	54	23	4	3	81.67
2020-2021	OBE-PAD	78	12	35	25	4	2	81.35
2021-2022	OBE-PAD	100	15	57	24	2	2	82.24

Data source: calculated based on final scores of international business communication courses from year 2017 to year 2022.

Table 3. 2020-2021 questionnaire survey on international business communication courses (%).

Course objective	question	Proportion of each level					Very poor	Course achievement Degree
		excellent	Very good	good	average	poor		
Obj 1	After the course learning, have you mastered the prevailing practices of international trade and effectively writing communication letters of international trade?	18.9	68.5	10.2	2.4	0	0	85.45
Obj 1	After the course learning, have you mastered the professional skills of international business messages?	19.2	69.2	9.8	1.8	0	0	84.36
Obj 1	After the course learning, have you mastered the professional skills of proposal reports and employment communications?	19.4	67.9	10.3	2.4	0	0	83.28
Obj 2	After the course learning, could you write international business letters for major steps of import and export trade with good English skills?	21.7	67.1	9.0	2.2	0	0	84.12
Obj 2	After the course learning, could you write international business messages in multi-cultural working context with good English skills?	20.8	66.7	8.9	3.6	0	0	85.25
Obj 2	After the course learning, could you write proposals and reports, employment communication messages with good English skills?	22.6	67.2	9.1	1.1	0	0	84.87
Obj 3	After the course learning, could you comprehensively apply international communication messages-writing skills and strategies to communicate effectively with international clients in English context?	23.7	66.8	8.8	0.7	0	0	85.19
Obj 3	After the course learning, could you comprehensively apply oral-presentation skills and strategies to communicate effectively with international clients in English context?	22.4	67.5	9.1	1.0	0	0	84.95
Obj 3	After the course learning, could you comprehensively apply business letter-writing skills and strategies to communicate effectively with international clients in major steps of international trade?	22.3	69.1	7.9	0.7	0	0	85.30

Continued

Obj 4	After the course learning, could you able to demonstrate an international vision in the diverse cultural context during international communication process?	19.6	65.4	11.7	3.3	0	0	84.56
Obj 4	After the course learning, could you able to demonstrate the awareness of cross-cultural communication in the diverse cultural context during international communication process?	19.2	67.9	10.2	2.7	0	0	84.37
Obj 4	After the course learning, could you able to demonstrate ethical values such as integrity, sincerity, and credibility during international communication process?	19.7	66.7	10.7	2.9	0	0	84.78

Data source: calculated based on 268 copies of questionnaire from students attending international business communication courses from year 2019 to year 2022.

Table 3 is the summary of the scores of the recent international business communication courses. Among them, in 2017-2018 academic year and 2018-2019 academic year the traditional teaching model is adopted; and in 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic year, the OBE-PAD concept teaching model is adopted described. After adopting the OBE-PAD teaching model, the students' comprehensive scores have been improved by about 10 points. Students attending international business communication courses from year 2019 to year 2022 have been investigated, and 275 copies of questionnaire have been sent and 268 copies have been collected. The results of the questionnaire survey on the students also show that the teaching model described in the study is conducive to the achievement of the course objectives (**Table 2** and **Table 3**).

The adoption of OBE-PAD teaching model has effectively improved the teaching quality of teachers and the learning effect of students. This teaching model can be used as a reference for teaching reform of other courses. At the same time, the students' self-study ability, innovative thinking ability, analysis ability, design ability, practical ability, communication and expression ability and other multiple abilities have been comprehensively coordinated. The follow-up survey of the graduates who have carried out the curriculum teaching reform shows that the adoption of the OBE-PAD teaching model has more effectively improved the participation of students, highlighted the learning objectives and achievement degree in the whole teaching process, and made the curriculum learning objectives and professional training objectives organically unified.

4. Conclusion

The traditional teaching of "international business communication" is mainly taught by teachers. Students' learning enthusiasm and interaction are not strong, and it is difficult to achieve expectations in the improvement of practical ability and the cultivation of core values. The "student-centered" teaching model integrating the concepts of OBE and PAD focuses on highlighting the real needs of

students. All curriculum processes are designed based on the training needs of students' practical knowledge, abilities, and values. The classroom is divided into two parts: Teachers' teaching and students' practical development. Diversified teaching methods are adopted to substitute students into the real workplace environment through various situations, projects, and roles. At the same time, connect the knowledge points between each unit and within each unit, effectively stimulate students' learning interest and self-learning consciousness, and imperceptibly improve students' practical ability and shape core values through various environments.

The study puts forward and practices the teaching model of OBE-PAD in international business communication course, forming three major teaching activity processes: teacher-centered teaching process, student-centered expansion process, and achievement-oriented assessment process. In this way, the course objectives are condensed, the teaching links are innovated, and the practical business situations and projects are integrated into the teaching practice. With recent five-year's teaching experience and three-year's results of implementing the student-centered OBE-PAD model, findings show that the model can effectively improve the teaching level of international business communication courses and students' business communication ability and business processing ability in international business activities, and is more conducive to cultivating high-quality and compound international business application-oriented talents.

Supporting Projects

Key Project of Education Reform of Beijing Institute of Petrochemical Technology: "Student-centered" Teaching Reform of "International Business Correspondence" Course Based on the Integration of OBE Concept and PAD Model (ZDXSZX202204003);

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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