

# A Study on the Reform of International E-Commerce Curriculum under the Perspective of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) Philosophy

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**Abstract:** With the rapid development of the international e-commerce environment, the overall industry demand for talents from the level, scale, diversification, refinement, specialization and other aspects have derived a greater change. The course of International E-Commerce is characterized by a close connection between theoretical application and practicality, based on which, guided by the concept of OBE, and starting from the industry and students' needs, the course cultivation objectives are determined by the needs, and then the course knowledge system is determined by the learning outcomes in the course cultivation objectives. Emphasizing student-centered and output-oriented, scientifically designing learning situations, refining knowledge points, implementing blended teaching modes, and constructing multi-dimensional assessment standards are the problems that need to be solved in today's International E-Commerce course. Studying the continuous construction and implementation of OBE teaching concept is expected to promote the adaptability of the talent cultivation of "International E-commerce" and the social demand, improve the teaching quality and enhance the student satisfaction.

**Keywords:** OBE; Blended Teaching; Multidimensional Assessment

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## 1.Introduction

In recent years, with the frequent occurrence of "black swan" events. Superimposed on the geopolitical conflicts in some regions, as well as the repeated pattern of global trade integration and regionalization, the development of international e-commerce is facing multiple challenges. In the continuous innovation of information technology, the business model of international e-commerce is undergoing a complex and profound transformation. As an important link to the global market, international e-commerce plays an important role in: economic, cultural, service and other trade areas. However, the traditional International E-commerce course has gradually exposed some problems in the teaching process, such as the disconnection between the course objectives and the actual needs of the industry, the teaching content lagging behind the rapid development of the industry, the teaching method is single, and the evaluation system is not scientific and reasonable enough, etc. These problems have to a certain extent constrained the mastery of the international e-commerce knowledge and skills of the students, and it is difficult to meet the urgent demand of the society for the international e-commerce professionals. It is also difficult to meet the current urgent demand for international e-commerce professionals.

Against this background, this paper focuses on the theme of "International E-commerce" course reform under the OBE

perspective, seeks for an in-depth combination of the OBE concept and this course to explore and form a set of practical and feasible course reform programs, in order to provide some ideas and references for the teaching reform of the same kind of courses, and to a certain extent to promote the vigorous development of international e-commerce education.

## 2. Overview of OBE Concept

The OBE concept is the concept of Outcomes - based Education (OBE). This education concept adopts a reverse-designed curriculum system in course design, pays attention to students' personalized differences in the process of implementation, and strives to let every student become the main body of learning, and its result evaluation system mainly focuses on students' learning results.

### 2.1 Connotation and Characteristics of OBE

The connotation of OBE teaching concept is mainly to determine the final learning outcomes of students to carry out educational and teaching activities, reversal from the traditional center for the teacher to gradually change to a student-centered.<sup>[1]</sup> The model of teaching by learning, focusing on the knowledge, ability and quality that students should have after graduation, and designing the curriculum system, teaching methods, evaluation methods and other teaching links around these expected results, in order to ensure that students achieve the expected learning results.

This teaching concept also has distinctive teaching characteristics: in the design of teaching and training programs with a clear goal, to closely match the social development, industry changes as the blueprint for the design of talent training programs, so that students' learning is more targeted; in the implementation of the teaching process, the "student-oriented" as the starting point, pay full attention to the individual differences of students, to ensure the participation of each student, to meet the needs of each student, and to ensure that students have the opportunity to participate in the teaching and learning process. In the implementation of the teaching process, "student-oriented" as the starting point, pay full attention to the individual differences of students, to ensure the participation of each student, to meet the learning needs of different students, and to promote the overall development of students; in the assessment results, there is a clear and diversified evaluation method, which can objectively measure the level of students' knowledge, ability and literacy development, and also cultivate the students' ability to learn independently and the awareness of lifelong learning, to ensure the continuity of student learning and development, and dynamically measure the assessment of the learning outcomes of the students.

Since the course "International E-commerce" has a strong application-oriented nature, the learning outcomes of students need to include the ability to operate international e-commerce platforms, international marketing skills, cross-border payment and settlement knowledge, international logistics and supply chain management and other aspects of the ability to independently carry out cross-border e-commerce business, etc., so the OBE concept of determining the connotations of the teaching-oriented characteristics of the needs of the industry. Therefore, the OBE concept is very suitable for the teaching reform of this course, and it breaks away from the more traditional and rigid theoretical teaching ideas.

### 2.2 Implementation of OBE Concept at Home and Abroad

The theoretical foundation of OBE was originally born in the 1950s in Taylor's goal theory and Bloom's mastery learning theory.<sup>[2]</sup> The theory was first introduced in the early 1980s by Spady and others in the U.S., and OBE formally entered the field of education in 1985 after the report on the career development of career needs-oriented doctors published by the Association of American Medical Colleges. In the 1990s, the OBE concept was firstly accepted by professors of medical schools, such as Harden, and applied to the fields of medical education and engineering education, and subsequently in the U.S. The concept of OBE was firstly applied to the fields of medical education and engineering education in Australia, Britain, Singapore and other countries, Later, it was widely practiced in basic education and higher education in the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Singapore and other countries.

In developed countries such as the United States, Singapore and the United Kingdom, OBE has become a mainstream concept in the education sector, and its ideas have been widely used in education professional certification standards. For example, the Accreditation Association for Engineering Education of the United States has fully accepted the OBE concept, and it has been used throughout the engineering education certification standards.

As for the exploration and start in China, it is relatively late compared with western countries. In 2005, Shantou University

took the lead in introducing the OBE concept and carrying out educational reforms, and made some progress in a small scale. It was not until June 2013, when China was accepted as a member of the Washington Agreement, that the OBE concept was gradually applied to higher education institutions and professional fields in China. Later, the Ministry of Education emphasized the international advanced concept of “student-centered, output-oriented, and continuous improvement” in the “Implementation Plan for the Audit and Evaluation of Undergraduate Teaching in General Colleges of Higher Education (2021-2025)” as the core concept to lead the whole evaluation work, which further promotes the practice of the OBE concept in domestic colleges and universities. OBE concept has further promoted the practice of OBE concept in domestic universities.

### **3.Key Points of the Implementation of OBE Concept in the International E-commerce Course**

In the implementation of OBE concept in International E-commerce course, student-centeredness is the core content. The difficulty lies in the in-depth research of industry needs and the continuous updating of market analysis, marketing, operation and other knowledge and skills that students need to master. Teaching design and teaching content and methods should also be centered on the evaluation of diversified systems, the introduction of real cases and cutting-edge knowledge, the use of project-driven, case study and other methods to stimulate students to take the initiative to participate.<sup>[3]</sup> In the evaluation of diversified system, we should also comprehensively measure the effectiveness of students, relying on the evaluation system to push back the course links, targeted adjustments, the formation of theory and practice of the closed-loop, and constantly improve the quality of teaching and course breadth and depth, to ensure that students complete the learning objectives of high quality, and strive to cultivate international e-commerce leaders to match the industry changes.

## **4.Analysis of the Status of International E-commerce Course**

### **4.1 Slow Updating of Teaching Content Structure**

Domestic colleges and universities “international e-commerce” course teaching content in the structure and framework of the speed of update lags behind the speed of development of the industry is mainly attributed to the following reasons: first of all, part of the teachers lack of practical experience and knowledge updating reserves slow, resulting in a lack of clarity of the industry’s cutting-edge knowledge and mastery of practical skills. For example, in a university in Guangdong, about 40% of the teachers of “international e-commerce” do not have relevant practical work experience in enterprises, and their understanding of the emerging cross-border e-commerce live broadcasting, short video marketing and other modes is very limited, which makes it difficult for them to incorporate the latest business models into their teaching content; secondly, there are deficiencies in the design of the curriculum in some universities and there is a clear phenomenon of duplication or derailment of the contents, such as the e-commerce program of a university in the central part of the country. Professional courses, and marketing-related course content in different semesters repeatedly, and for big data capture analysis and other emerging content rarely involved, and the relevant university teaching management model conservative, for the course outline and teaching progress of the revision process is cumbersome, according to the survey, a university from the application for updating the content of the course to the final approval of the implementation of an average of 3 months; Finally, because of the long cycle of textbook preparation Finally, because of the long cycle of textbook writing, from the author’s cell phone data publisher typesetting, the whole process takes 1 - 2 years or even longer, and the rate of updating the textbook is slow, not updated within 5 years of the textbook in the minority, according to a domestic e-commerce platform related to international e-commerce shelves textbook research in the 100 international e-commerce related textbooks included, the last 5 years have not been updated accounted for 30%.

### **4.2 Limitations of Teaching Methods and Low Participation of Students**

Currently, the teaching of International E-commerce is characterized by: traditional lectures with less interaction, especially among young teachers; weak practical teaching; lagging teaching cases and insufficient model innovation.

On the one hand, due to objective reasons such as teaching resources and funding, the design of practical teaching is not perfect, and there is a lack of professional cross-border e-commerce practice platform and software, so that students can

not experience the process of e-commerce operation and the real link, which makes it difficult for students to find a point of match with their actual needs and interests, and thus the motivation for learning is insufficient, and the attendance rate as well as the rate of raising their heads will be affected accordingly. On the other hand, in the teaching process, some teachers ignore the rapid development of the international e-commerce field and the global economic situation and volume of continuous updating, so that the classroom lacks the introduction of the latest industry dynamics and actual cases, so that the teaching content is out of touch with the actual teaching atmosphere, students are prone to resistance, unwilling to actively participate in classroom discussions, which affects the learning effect of students and the assessment of their participation. Participation assessment.

### **4.3 Lack of Depth of Understanding of “Student-centeredness**

Most teachers are deeply rooted in traditional teaching concepts and regard knowledge transfer as the core goal of teaching.<sup>[4]</sup> They are accustomed to designing teaching programs from their own perspectives, focusing on how they “teach” and neglecting the experience and effect of students’ “learning”, and failing to fully recognize students’ individual differences. Fully recognize the individual differences and learning needs of students, it is difficult to meet the learning expectations of different students, resulting in students in the classroom in a passive acceptance of the position, learning enthusiasm and initiative is difficult to be effectively stimulated.

At present, due to the limitations of some teachers’ teaching methods and the updating of course content, the classroom atmosphere is still a one-way indoctrination teaching mode, which lacks a relaxing and free academic atmosphere as well as good teacher-student interaction, and ignores the individual needs of some students. This kind of teaching method is difficult to stimulate students’ interest in learning, and also has limitations in cultivating students’ critical thinking and innovation ability, understanding and memorization of knowledge.

### **4.4 Lack of Evaluation on the Effect of Ability Cultivation**

At present, some domestic colleges and universities still use a single-dimensional assessment method, which focuses on students’ scores in the final exam. In the evaluation system of examination courses, most colleges and universities adopt the following: the final examination score accounts for 70% of the total score, and the process evaluation only accounts for 30%, which leads teachers and students to pay too much attention to the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, but neglect the cultivation of practical ability and comprehensive quality.

The main body of assessment in practice teaching is also mainly led by teachers, lacking the participation of diversified subjects from enterprises, industry experts, etc. Enterprise tutors and industry experts have a more direct understanding of students’ practical ability and professionalism, but their opinions and suggestions are not fully reflected in the assessment process, resulting in a certain degree of disconnection between the assessment results and the actual market demand. Because of the absence of the main body, the assessment indicators also fail to fully reflect the requirements of the “International E-commerce” course on the ability that students should have, such as the ability to analyze the market, international trade practice, network marketing and pricing ability of multiple product combinations, and so on. It is due to the lack of these clear quantitative standards, making it difficult for teachers to accurately determine the strengths and weaknesses of students in various abilities.

## **5. International E-commerce Course Reform Research**

### **5.1 Accelerating the Development of Teaching Systems and Content Renewal**

Combine the OBE concept in depth, formulate clear course objectives, not limited to the updating of teaching materials and other book knowledge, accelerate the research of domestic and foreign international e-commerce industry enterprises, to understand their talents in the analysis and expansion of the international market, cross-border e-commerce platform operation, international market marketing, international logistics and supply chain management and other aspects of the ability requirements, which serve as a comprehensive blueprint for the formulation of the course objectives, to ensure that what students learn meets the needs and trends of the industry. According to this, the course objectives are formulated as a comprehensive blueprint to ensure that what students learn is in line with the industry needs and trends.

And in the development of the teaching program, we need to break the original way of arranging the teaching content

according to chapters, and integrate the theoretical knowledge and practical operation organically. For example, after explaining the theory of international e-commerce platform operation, students are arranged to practice the actual platform operation, and combined with the previous analysis of the international e-commerce market, timely assessment of the students' learning situation, so as to achieve the integration of "teaching, evaluation, and improvement" and normalization.

## 5.2 Diversified Teaching Methods to Enhance Student Participation

Synthesizing the advantages of OBE teaching concept, adopting project-driven and virtual simulation practice teaching method, students as the implementation of the project main body, to complete the actual international e-commerce project in the form of a group, learn to use the group synergistic division of labor, improve the simulation of cross-border e-commerce store for market research, product selection, store decoration, marketing and promotion and customer service and other full-process operations. In the teaching process, both the traditional theoretical analysis and part of the practical operation are integrated, and the teamwork ability of students is cultivated. This teaching method enables students to apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned to the actual projects and feel the practical value and significance of learning, thus stimulating students' interest and enthusiasm in learning.

Combining practical cases and flipped classroom, students independently study the course video, read the textbook, complete the pre-study homework and other learning tasks through the online teaching platform before class, while in the classroom, the classic cases and the latest practical cases in the field of international e-commerce are selected, such as the success and failure of Amazon, Alibaba International Station and other well-known enterprises, to guide the students to conduct in-depth analysis and discussion. In the process of case analysis, students need to think critically and evaluate the enterprise strategy, market decision, operation mode and so on in the case, and put forward their own insights and suggestions. Under this method, students can not only develop good habits of independent learning, but also utilize more time in the classroom to deepen their understanding and mastery of knowledge through interactive exchanges, and improve the depth and breadth of students' participation in learning.

## 5.3 Establishing a Comprehensive Student-Centered Classroom Framework

In view of the fact that some teachers' understanding of the OBE concept is not thorough, colleges and universities can organize teachers to participate in training on the OBE concept and related teaching methods, so as to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding of the "student-oriented" teaching concept, and to enhance teachers' ability in teaching design, teaching implementation and teaching evaluation. Teachers are encouraged to carry out teaching research and teaching reform practice, and constantly explore teaching methods and means suitable for the International E-commerce course to improve teaching quality.

From the perspective of industry cognition, teachers are also encouraged to go to international e-commerce enterprises during the summer and winter vacations to work out or participate in actual projects, so as to improve teachers' practical ability and industry experience. Or the school to increase the establishment of the corresponding entrepreneurial innovation project special funds to encourage teachers and students to create e-commerce micro-enterprises, for teachers and students to jointly accumulate the corresponding practical experience. Only teachers with rich practical experience can better combine theoretical knowledge with practical application, provide students with more practical and targeted teaching content and guidance, and enhance the practicality and attractiveness of classroom teaching.

## 5.4 Continuous Attention to the effect of Curriculum Reform

Teachers should set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) assessment objectives according to the development needs of international e-commerce and the future career orientation of students, after fully understanding the employment needs and career planning of students when formulating the corresponding assessment plan. Students' process and summative assessment results should also be analyzed regularly to observe the trends in the distribution of grades, pass rate, excellence rate and other indicators. For example, if it is found that the assessment results of the corresponding knowledge points of a certain chapter are unsatisfactory, it may suggest that the teaching content or method of that part needs to be improved, rather than relying entirely on the final assessment to urge students to improve. Teachers should actively and regularly collect student feedback during the teaching process, and collect students' feedback on the course through



questionnaires and interviews. Find out their satisfaction with the teaching content, teaching methods, teaching materials, practical sessions and other aspects of the course, as well as the difficulties encountered in the learning process. The feedback information and evaluation data collected above are analyzed in depth to find out the key problems and improvement directions in the course reform. Based on the results of data analysis, formulate specific improvement measures and plans. While implementing the above behaviors, we should also actively maintain close contact with cooperative enterprises and industry associations, regularly inform students of the corresponding changes according to the development trend of the industry and make timely improvements to coordinate students' learning plans, and strengthen the management and supervision of students' process-oriented learning, including classroom performance, group discussion, completion of assignments, and progress of projects. Utilize the Learning Management System (LMS) to record students' learning trajectories and identify problems in the learning process in a timely manner. For example, the LMS is used to view the length of students' online learning and the frequency of their participation in discussions.

## Conclusion

International E-commerce course should be deeply combined with the concept of OBE, reconstruct the knowledge system, break the traditional discipline system, integrate multiple disciplines, build a framework system centered on the cultivation of students' ability, and actively introduce the industry dynamics, so that the students can understand the content such as cross-border e-commerce live, social e-commerce, green trade policy and so on in a timely manner, and the course let the course content keep up with the times and match the industry reality. At the same time in the assessment, should also reshape the evaluation system, deepen the optimization of the construction of the faculty, to protect the continuous improvement mechanism, the introduction of diversified evaluation of the main body, the formation of the "teaching, learning, assessment, change, use" five optimization of the closed loop.

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## Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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