

Postprint: Research on Innovative Education Models for Media Programs Based on Outcome-Based Education (OBE)

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Abstract

Since its emergence in the 1990s, the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) model has evolved into a novel framework for undergraduate education quality assessment in China, representing a new trend in the nation's higher education development. Media-related majors, as among the most popular fields of study today, are undergoing rapid expansion, making pedagogical models and practical technical approaches that better facilitate the cultivation of media professionals a key focus of investigation for researchers and scholars. This paper examines the research value of the OBE philosophy for media major pedagogy, and through the "outcome-oriented" principle, develops an innovative research paradigm that integrates "reverse thinking" with "forward derivation," thereby offering a new pathway for reforming media programs in higher education institutions.

Full Text

Preamble

Title: Research on Innovative Education Models for Media Majors Based on the OBE Concept

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Abstract: Since its development in the 1990s, the OBE (Outcomes-Based Education) model has become a new mode for evaluating undergraduate education quality in China and represents a new trend in higher education development. As one of the most popular majors today, media studies is experiencing rapid growth, making the exploration of teaching models and practical techniques that better facilitate media talent development a key focus for scholars and experts. This paper discusses the research value of the OBE concept for media education and establishes an innovative research model that combines "reverse thinking"

with “forward deduction” through an “outcomes-oriented” approach, providing a new pathway for reforming media programs in higher education institutions.

Keywords: OBE model; media majors; research background; research significance; teaching reform

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1. Background of Innovative Research on Media Majors Under the OBE Concept

The OBE (Outcomes-Based Education) concept was first proposed by American scholar William Spady in 1994. The OBE model refers to “clearly focusing and organizing the education system to ensure students achieve substantial success in their future lives.” Different disciplines can develop personalized approaches based on their characteristics, thereby transforming the traditional “teacher-centered” teaching model and helping to promote student enthusiasm and learning effectiveness. Since the 1990s, OBE has been implemented in basic education reforms in the United States and Australia and is now gaining increasing attention in China’s education sector.

China’s media education has developed rapidly since 1980, with nearly a thousand institutions offering media majors by 2020. In terms of program structure, media majors have become increasingly specialized, evolving from the early single journalism major to encompass broadcast journalism, news editing, advertising, new media and internet studies, and other specialized fields, making the development of media programs more diverse and specific.

On January 25, 2019, during the 12th Central Political Bureau’s collective study session, General Secretary Xi Jinping stated, “Promoting media integration and developing all-media has become an urgent task before us” [1]. Against this backdrop, the demand for talent in the media industry has undergone tremendous changes, with versatile talents becoming increasingly favored [2]. So-called versatile talents refer to individuals who have mastered various subfields of the media industry, such as being able to independently complete the entire process of online video production (filming, editing, and broadcasting), operate new media platforms alone, and conduct integrated product planning and promotion. This poses higher requirements for talent cultivation, and traditional media talent training models in universities can hardly adapt to modern needs, making innovation and reform of media programs imperative.

Currently, many university media programs still suffer from problems such as

theory-heavy curricula, monotonous teaching methods, teaching objectives disconnected from society, and overly rigid evaluation systems. How to effectively transform theoretical courses into practical outcomes is a key issue for improving teaching quality. Cultivating students' knowledge, abilities, and literacy cannot rely solely on teacher instruction; students need more opportunities for hands-on practice. Through practical training and competitions that meet professional talent needs, students can grow more rapidly. The OBE concept provides a theoretical foundation for schools to innovate their teaching models and offers better support conditions for media program reform.

2. Significance of Innovative Research on Media Majors Under the OBE Concept

With the continuous advancement of internet and digital technologies, the media industry has entered a period of rapid development. The emergence of new media has caused tremendous changes in the traditional media industry, ushering in a “converged media” era where various media forms integrate with one another. As domestic higher education becomes increasingly mature, the demand for high-level, high-quality higher education has grown more stringent. Educators need to provide higher-level, high-quality, and rigorous higher vocational education so that students can better acquire professional knowledge and practical skills to facilitate future employment.

In early 2018, the Ministry of Education issued the *National Standards for Teaching Quality of Undergraduate Programs in Regular Higher Education Institutions*. As the first national teaching quality standard in China's higher education field, it effectively promoted the widespread application of higher vocational education based on the principles of student-centeredness, outcomes-based education, and continuous improvement. The education model that emphasizes “outcomes orientation” has gained increasing attention from higher education institutions.

3. Strategies for Innovative Education Reform in Media Majors Under the OBE Concept

3.1 Reverse Thinking: Establishing “Characteristic” Teaching Standards

The core of the OBE concept lies in being “student-centered and outcomes-oriented.” The primary task of integrating OBE into teaching is to plan expected learning outcomes in advance. Valuable outcome planning will accelerate the implementation of the OBE model. Compared with other liberal arts majors, media studies is more practical and comprehensive, requiring close integration with relevant industries. On the one hand, it is necessary to understand the latest industry developments and needs; on the other hand, it is essential to apply learned knowledge to serve society, spread positive energy, and promote social progress.

3.1.1 Focusing on Industry Needs Through interviews with media industry practitioners, relevant workers, and research scholars, combined with analysis of job postings from well-known domestic media companies in the past two years, researchers have identified several common characteristics of industry demands. First, a comprehensive knowledge system. Job postings increasingly emphasize the application of comprehensive knowledge; for example, television directors often need literary creation and screenwriting skills, while video post-production staff also require advertising marketing and content planning abilities. Second, passion for the media industry. This includes sensitivity to hot events and basic literacy for communication and cooperation. Third, possessing a specialized skill. Examples include photography, videography, and post-production. Compared with traditional media's filming, editing, and broadcasting, the new media industry imposes richer requirements on practitioners. Therefore, during teaching reform, it is crucial to focus on students' "comprehensive knowledge" learning abilities and cultivate their media literacy.

3.1.2 Setting Teaching Objectives Teaching objectives play a vital leading role in a course. Correct and reasonable teaching objectives can promote curriculum development, disciplinary progress, and facilitate quality learning outcomes. Compared with traditional media talent cultivation, media programs under the OBE model need to update their training programs based on current media industry demands. It is necessary to understand current talent cultivation goals and directions and clarify the integration of theoretical knowledge and practical abilities in professional courses. Simultaneously, objectives should be based on students' real needs through quantitative and qualitative research methods to collect students' course expectations and career directions, thereby establishing professional course teaching objectives that both meet industry needs and gain student recognition.

Under the guidance of the OBE concept, teaching objectives should be formulated from three aspects: knowledge, ability, and literacy. In terms of knowledge, students are required to solidly grasp theoretical knowledge and integrate it with industry knowledge based on industry needs, avoiding blind learning disconnected from reality. In terms of ability, students must master practical skills in the media industry, such as photography, videography, post-production editing, graphic design, and copywriting. Students should be able to actively learn and create based on their professional interests. In terms of literacy, first, students must establish correct media values and output positive content; second, they should develop professional abilities to face challenges, work in teams, and communicate effectively; and finally, they should cultivate a passion for the media industry.

3.1.3 Optimizing Evaluation Methods Compared with traditional "teacher-centered" teaching methods, the OBE education concept makes "student-centeredness" its core. Cultivating students' comprehensive skills and media literacy is a key objective of media program teaching model

innovation. “Continuous improvement” is a reform focused on learning evaluation, emphasizing continuous feedback in the teaching process—namely, the “evaluation-feedback-improvement” model [3]. “Evaluation” refers to collecting students’ views on course content, process, and gains through quantitative methods such as questionnaires and scoring; “feedback” refers to collecting students’ perspectives or confusions regarding course optimization through qualitative methods such as group discussions and one-on-one conversations; “improvement” primarily targets teachers, who modify and optimize course content based on student feedback to better meet student and industry needs.

The entire process is continuous and cyclical. Teachers can constantly add new content during teaching to adapt to the rapid development of media industry talent needs and refine their teaching 水平. Students can develop divergent thinking, actively consider professional needs and curriculum construction directions, increase learning enthusiasm, and enhance industry awareness. In terms of professional course assessment, evaluation methods should not be limited to quantitative measures such as exams and tests but can also include qualitative assessments like group discussions and interviews. Teachers need to develop more valuable assessment methods based on industry needs. Workshop-style team projects can enhance students’ cooperation abilities and are equally crucial for cultivating students’ media literacy.

3.2 Forward Deduction: Constructing an “Innovative” Teaching Model

Traditional media teaching models are teacher-dominated, where teachers impart knowledge and students receive it. In contrast, OBE concept-based media program reforms are student-dominated, with students actively choosing and learning while teachers serve as facilitators and guides. Therefore, when developing media practice courses, it is necessary to focus on industry development and student needs, transforming “theory-based” classrooms into “practice-based” classrooms to cultivate students’ comprehensive professional abilities in pre-production planning, mid-production filming, and post-production editing.

3.2.1 Blended Teaching The greatest characteristic of blended teaching lies in the “flipped classroom,” combining in-class and out-of-class activities with online and offline integration [4]. Teachers place knowledge requiring understanding and memorization on self-built online platforms for students’ autonomous learning after class, supplemented by in-class exercises and knowledge point tests to facilitate detection of students’ autonomous learning effectiveness. In the classroom, teachers employ more comprehensive teaching methods such as case analysis, group discussions, and scenario exercises, focusing on cultivating students’ comprehensive analysis abilities and improving their media literacy. This online-offline blended teaching can maximize teaching effectiveness and fully mobilize student learning enthusiasm. Disciplinary foundational knowledge can be learned through online courses outside the classroom, with rich converged media platforms providing abundant literature for study; in the classroom, teachers

guide students to conduct divergent thinking based on out-of-class content and transform theoretical knowledge into practice.

3.2.2 Integrating Classroom and Competitions The integration of competitions and teaching refers to instructors incorporating disciplinary competitions into course design to achieve “four integrations” : integration of teaching content with competition projects, integration of teaching resources with competition resources, integration of teaching processes with competition processes, and integration of teaching evaluation with competition evaluation [5]. Previously, disciplinary competitions and classroom courses were almost completely separate, with teachers delivering classroom knowledge and students independently participating in skills competitions. Since 2018, the concept of “integration of competitions and teaching” has become increasingly popular in university instruction, organically merging teaching and competitions to promote teaching through competitions and vice versa, becoming a new teaching method. This is a mutually integrated and influential process. The teaching process tends to be campus-based, where learning theoretical knowledge and practice are both part of the teaching process; competitions, however, tend to be society-oriented, no longer limited to the classroom and campus, providing students with broader 展示空间. Students can continuously create innovative artistic works based on their abilities. The teaching model integrating competitions and teaching not only stimulates students’ creative enthusiasm but also advances the teaching process. Teachers organically combine disciplinary competitions with practical courses, using course-related competitions as extensions of classroom teaching, and disciplinary skills competitions become effective means to stimulate students’ creative enthusiasm and test their learning outcomes. “Promoting teaching through competitions, promoting learning through competitions, and replacing practice with competitions” has become a new characteristic of course teaching.

3.2.3 Building a “Workshop-Style” Converged Media Training Lab Converged media is not a single medium but the integration of various media, including traditional and new media. Single media platforms typically serve themselves, while converged media serves the overall situation, achieving resource sharing across different fields more efficiently [6]. Therefore, building a converged media training workshop for media majors is crucial for promoting OBE concept-based innovation and reform. A media training lab is a space that provides practical training for students within the school and offers various forms of support. Traditional media labs have relatively 单一 content, low student usage, and can easily lead to lack of learning enthusiasm and initiative. Establishing a “workshop-style” training lab can address these shortcomings. The “workshop-style” teaching model was first proposed by the German Bauhaus School in the early 20th century, referring to teachers grouping students based on their interests and skills to explore, discuss, and collaborate on projects or topics. This is a teaching method that can fully 发挥学生主观能动性 and cultivate students individually [7].

Integrating the rich resources of converged media with the characteristics of workshop-style training labs, a converged media lab should include both traditional media practice workshops such as publication production, radio broadcasting, and book publishing, as well as new media practice workshops for photography and videography, audio-video production, and new media operation. Transforming the training lab into distinctive regional workshops enables more standardized and systematic management. The training lab functions like a large organization that brings together various style “clubs,” allowing students to choose different workshops based on their preferences. Such practical training can maximize students’ practical enthusiasm, and students can discover their true interests in the media industry through continuous exploration.

3.2.4 Personalized Student Guidance OBE concept-based teaching reform focuses more on students’ vertical development rather than horizontal development. Through general and specialized learning, students can be exposed to comprehensive knowledge and continuously expand their knowledge base. Through personalized learning, students can identify their professional interests and continuously explore and conduct in-depth research to excel in certain aspects of their specialization.

Personalized student guidance is manifested in two key aspects. First, developing more targeted guidance methods based on different student characteristics. Second, providing more targeted optimization suggestions for student works. Each student has their own interests and strengths; some excel in writing and can be encouraged to pursue literary creation, while others are skilled in hands-on practice and can be encouraged to learn photography and videography. Maximizing students’ interest points as the starting point for professional learning is essential. For practical works from different student groups, evaluations should also be tailored to group characteristics rather than applying uniform standards, respecting the unique development of each student and team.

The OBE concept, as an emerging teaching model, is being researched and applied in an increasing number of countries and universities. Through OBE-based teaching reform, students become more enthusiastic about learning, and teachers can develop more targeted teaching models under this concept. Ultimately, improvements in students’ knowledge, abilities, and professional literacy are the best measures of OBE model innovation. However, OBE implementation is a long-term process requiring continuous testing and improvement. In the transformation from theory to practice, various practical problems inevitably arise. Changes in teaching resources, practice platforms, teaching models, and teaching evaluation require joint efforts from the state, government, universities, teachers, and students.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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