

# Research on Integrating Moral Education Into College English Course on the Basis of Outcomes-Based Teaching Mode

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College English courses are an important part of college education with humanistic and instrumental characteristics. Outcomes-based teaching method is oriented by students' learning output, which has been applied in education for decades. Students achieve the outcomes through communication, cooperation, and exploration from which their initiative, confidence, and learning ability are improved. It is instructive to help student both develop language skills as well as enrich the knowledge of Chinese traditional culture. This paper explores the necessity of moral education and relates them to College English course on the basis of outcomes-based teaching method. It is intended to help teachers understand the theory and philosophy of outcomes-based education and put it into moral education practice in their instructional planning, teaching, and assessment of students.

*Keywords:* moral education, college English course, outcomes-based teaching mode

## Introduction

College English courses are compulsory basic courses for non-English majors in colleges and universities of China. As an interactive and comprehensive teaching system, College English courses take English language knowledge and application skills, learning strategies, and cross-cultural communication as its main content. In teaching, teachers should pay attention to the cultivation and improvement of students' comprehensive language application ability, especially their listening and speaking ability, so that they can effectively use English for oral and written information exchange in their future work and social exchanges. At the same time, students' independent learning ability and their comprehensive cultural literacy are enhanced to meet the needs of China's economic development and international exchanges.

Moral education emphasizes the comprehensive integration of ideological and political elements with courses teaching, and focuses on the concepts and methods of ideological and political education (Mo & Chen, 2022, p. 1). In 2017, the Ministry of Education published *Outline for Promoting the Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities*, proposing strengthening the teaching reform of various courses aiming at ideological and political work in courses, which advocates that the ideological and political elements contained in each course should be organically integrated into classroom teaching to realize the harmonious unity of moral education and knowledge education. Under the guidance of this outline, colleges and universities around the country actively carry out the ideological and political work in various courses.

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Moral education in College English teaching is of great importance, which should run through the whole process of teaching. This paper discusses how to integrate ideological and political elements into College English teaching on the basis of outcome-based teaching method, hoping to provide a meaningful reference for ideological and political education of College English courses in the future.

### **Necessity of Moral Education in College English Courses**

Being a carrier of culture, language serves as a tool for communication with humanistic characteristics. It is absolutely feasible to mine ideological and political resources in English courses, which determines that English course teaching has the function of ideological and political education (Mo & Chen, 2022, p. 2). English teaching not only contains the learning of language, but also conveys the ideology and values of the output language, which will undoubtedly impact the values of college students. Therefore, it's very necessary to integrate the moral education into English courses teaching.

In *Teaching Guides for College English Course (2022)* issued by the Higher Education Department of the Ministry of Education, it is stated that English is an important tool for international exchanges in science, technology, and culture. By learning and using English, we can directly understand the scientific and technological progress, management experience and ideas at the forefront of foreign countries, and learn and understand the world's outstanding culture and civilization. It is also conducive to effectively spreading Chinese culture, promoting extensive exchanges with people from all countries, and enhancing the country's soft power. It can be concluded that English teaching has practical significance and long-term impact on the future development of college students. However, for a long time, the majority of English teachers lay more emphasis on the cultivation of language skills, the enhancement of cross-cultural communication awareness and communication ability. Instead, they often neglect the ideological and political education in language teaching.

With a series of documents and guidance on moral education in colleges and universities being issued by the country, ideology and politics in courses are widely stressed and implemented. The requirement of improving teachers' ideological and political quality, professional level, and teaching ability is clearly put forward hereafter. College students are at an important stage of forming an outlook on life, and they are supposed to understand the differences between Chinese and foreign cultures, values, ways of thinking, and other aspects so as to cultivate their cross-cultural awareness, improve intercultural communication ability, and broaden their international vision. In view of this, teachers should not only develop students' language knowledge and language skills, but also cultivate students' positive emotional attitudes, providing students with the necessary basic knowledge, good emotional attitudes and values for their lifelong development.

### **Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and the Previous Studies of Its Application in English Teaching**

#### **Overview of OBE**

OBE is an educational theory or philosophy first born in the basic education reform in the United States and Australia in 1980s, which centers every part of the education system around the goal (outcomes). OBE particularly emphasizes that educators have a clear idea of students' final learning outcomes, and teaching design is based on the preset goals of students' learning outcomes. By the end of educational experience, every student

should have achieved the targeted outcomes. Since the concept of OBE emerges, many scholars and educators have made a significant contribution to it, among whom William G. Spady (1994) is regarded by many as the world authority who has developed OBE to a higher stage by giving the most detailed articulation of the theory underpinning OBE.

In Spady's words,

Outcome-Based Education means clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences. This means starting with a clear picture of what is important for students to be able to do, then organizing the curriculum, instruction, and assessment to make sure this learning ultimately happens. (Spady, 1994, p. 1)

Compared with traditional teaching method, OBE focuses on results. Students are informed of clear goals and expected outcomes at the beginning of the educational experience. They have a comprehensive understanding of learning content, and develop personalized learning plans according to their own learning needs. Teachers also know how to help students achieve their desired learning goals through an appropriate organization of the education system and through a series of classroom practices. In the process of achieving the goal, teachers can adjust the learning progress and teaching content at any time according to the students' learning situation.

The OBE system mainly consists of three stages in a complete educational experience: intended learning outcomes (ILO), teaching activities (TA), and outcomes-based assessment (OBA) (Sun & Lu, 2020, p. 2). Intended learning outcomes are framed at the beginning of a learning process. Once they are defined, they make an impact on each component of the teaching process. Teachers must be clearly focused on what they hope learners will succeed in the end after completing the specified learning tasks. Therefore, when teachers plan, teach attention should be paid to helping learners develop knowledge, skills, and personality. So they can finally achieve significant results that are clearly defined. This stage requires teachers to make short-term and long-term plans for students, abiding by the "student-centered" educational rules. OBE is underpinned by the basic premise that teachers give full consideration to student's learning conditions and characteristics, but establish higher standards so as to encourage them to be successful, to reinforce their study to be more successful. Teachers are also obligated to focus all students' assessments on clearly expressed outcomes.

TA is inextricably linked with ILO. The key of TA stage is how and what students learn individually, rather than how and what teachers teach. Once the scope and structure of the content through which students will develop their knowledge, skills, and values are defined by the outcomes, students deeply engage with the course teaching independently, who would design their own learning goals through understanding the learning tasks, and harvest teaching results through effective methods. Under the guidance of clear achievement goals, students are driven to master the basic cultural knowledge of English, improve their oral and language communication ability, and achieve the goal of strengthening their independent learning ability. In addition, in the process of achieving the outcomes, students' sense of autonomy, initiative, and enthusiasm in English learning are strengthened therewith. After autonomous learning, students conduct self-inspection and self-reflection, so as to effectively improve English learning efficiency and promote the common development of English teaching and learning while mastering professional English knowledge and language ability.

In OBA, teachers use a variety of real practices to evaluate students learning, and let students reflect on their learning to develop their practical and innovative abilities. A combination of formative assessment and

summative assessment is applied for outcomes-based teaching, since grades often fail to tell how students learn well at a large scale. Abilities such as critical thinking, beliefs, and learning attitudes can be judged in formative assessment to build up their confidence. Whichever assessment method is used, the assessment should always contribute to students' learning. Assessment is to support learning, so the assessment task must provide students with opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned and help them identify what they still need to learn. Because learning is a process of constant reorganization of knowledge, assessment should help students connect with what is being learnt from their previous knowledge. The principle of designing assessment is that students can get a sense of accomplishment, their upper reaches of understanding are expanded, and they develop their critical thinking.

### **Studies of OBE in College English Teaching**

Searching in CNKI with the keywords "OBE" and "English teaching courses", the author found that researches relating to the two themes can mainly be divided into two categories.

The first category is about the application of outcome-based teaching in professional English courses. Xuan Lingyan, Shen Yanli, and Li Jun (2018) take the teaching of civil engineering English as the teaching reform object and carry out practice of teaching reform in civil engineering specific English based on OBE education concept. A conclusion is drawn that OBE teaching mode has a good effect in improving the English application ability of civil engineering students. Zhou Jinghong et al. (2022) formulate the teaching objectives and teaching methods under the guidance of the OBE concept to improve the effectiveness of the chemical engineering English curriculum teaching, which effectively improve students' professional qualities and expand students' international vision. Luo Ying (2022) uses OBE to guide the teaching of business English reading, and she views that by "designing back" teaching objectives according to graduation requirements, teachers can make dynamic adjustments according to the teaching evaluation results in the teaching process. Students' sustainable development can be attained through the achievement of teaching objectives.

The second category is about the application of outcomes-based teaching in college public English courses. Li Huiju (2016) takes the reform of college English teaching mode as an example. She points out that the OBE concept is an important support for the reform of the education model. College English teaching model based on OBE concept and "flipped classroom" is bound to have a significant and far-reaching impact on college English teaching in China. Ming Yushan and Jiang Moran (2019) do researches on the construction of college English teaching evaluation model under the concept of "OBE". He suggests that teachers should grasp the core achievements for evaluation, make scientific evaluation according to the learning situation, and apply multiple and compound evaluation models to promote the continuous improvement of college English teaching. Yang Xin and Yang Lifan (2022) analyze the relationship between OBE education concept and college English teaching, and conduct a teaching experiment to explore the feasibility and effectiveness of the education model of cultivating college students' English application ability based on OBE concept, which proves that the education model of cultivating college students' English application ability based on OBE concept is helpful to improve college students' comprehensive language application ability.

Although scholars have made some achievements in this field in China, most of their researches incline to the application of this model in the teaching of public English and industrial English in college English courses. In view of this, this study will provide a meaningful reference for the exploration, practice, and research of integrating moral education into College English courses on the basis of OBE.

## Case Study

### Exploring Ideological and Political Elements of College English Textbooks

Textbooks are an important carrier for implementing the fundamental task of fostering student virtues through education and promoting students' well-rounded development. There are rich ideological and political elements hidden in college English textbooks. As the instructor and organizer of teaching, teachers are like miners who explore the elements and integrate them into the teaching of College English. Teachers realize the ideological and political education by excavating the integration point of ideological and political education and carrying out teaching design and practice of moral education, which can not only help students acquire language through their own learning, thinking, and practice, but also help them obtain correct ideas, values, and moral norms.

Taking the textbook *Experiencing English Viewing, Listening & Speaking* (4th edition) as an example, the author explores the ideological and political elements according to the unit themes, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1

*Unit Themes and Ideological and Political Elements*

Unit themes	Ideological and political elements
Passions	1. Various cultures and foreign languages 2. Chinese folk music
Spending habits	1. A correct view of money and spending 2. Green shopping
Career paths	1. Self-improvement 2. Dedication, honesty and trustworthiness
Challenges	1. The spirit of perseverance 2. The spirit of Olympic Games
Confidence	1. The Chinese Dream 2. Confidence and optimism
Wild places	1. Effect of human activities on wild animals 2. Environmental awareness

Quite obviously, the ideological and political elements involve China's traditional culture, virtues, and human spirit: truth, goodness, and beauty. At the beginning of each lesson, teachers formulate the goal of ideological and political education for the unit, which aims to pass on knowledge and skills, help students improve their English application ability, and carry out humanistic education to guide students to establish a correct value orientation, allowing them widely and deeply perceive the differences of Chinese and western cultures and values.

### Programming Outcomes With the Integration of Ideological and Political Elements

As Roy Killen (2020, p. 6) points out, any curriculum documents are written in broad terms; hence they do not cater directly for the special needs of individual schools or specific groups of students. Consequently, teachers need to translate whatever curriculum guidelines they receive into specific teaching programs of sufficient detail to guide their day-to-day activities. In practice, the real implementation of curriculum needs the support of relevant teaching activities and strategies.

The ideological and political education of curriculum is a gradual and in-depth transmission of emotions and values, and its realization must be embodied in specific curriculum activities. To do this, teachers should expand and enrich the teaching content, and integrate moral outcomes of learning Chinese humanities related to politics, history, geography, economy, education, and many other aspects into teaching design. Students' learning conditions, individual differences, and English proficiency should be taken into account in teacher's selection of course outcomes, teaching strategies, and assessment procedures. In general, the outcomes of College

English course, in accordance with the contents of student textbook, fall into two categories: subjected-related academic outcomes (language skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and translating) and moral education outcomes.

Table 2

*Teaching Design for OBE*

Subject-related academic outcomes	Moral education outcomes	Teaching activities
Use skillfully the words and expressions of likes and interests in the text	Appreciate the aesthetic beauty of Chinese folk songs	Talk about one's own passions and interests fluently
Learn about the vocabulary and expressions of spending habits and shopping choices	Uphold green shopping and be the master of money	Plan monthly consumption reasonably
Be proficient in using vocabulary and sentences related to jobs and career choices	Guide students to be dedicated, responsible and show respect to every worker	Describe various jobs and make a self-introduction
Master the time clauses to describing sequence	Inspire students to face difficulties with courage and persistent struggle	Share how you overcome daily challenges and offer advice to others
Know well the vocabulary especially adjectives about appearance and personality and modifying adverbs	Build up self-confidence as a Chinese and strive to realize the Chinese dream	Talk about appearance and personality
Learn the language and vocabulary to talk about places and make comparisons between them	Raise the awareness of protecting environment	Speak with enthusiasm about the natural world and describing similarities

**Case Analysis of Ideology and Politics in College English Teaching on the Basis of OBE**

In OBE system, teaching plan generally goes through three main steps: define the outcomes that students are to achieve, decide how to help them achieve the outcomes, and establish how to evaluate the outcomes when they are achieved. To demonstrate the specific implementation of teaching plan of ideological and political education on the basis of OBE in College English courses, the author takes the theme “passions” as an example. The steps are as follows:

**Step One: Design of the outcomes:** This step is to determine teaching outcomes. It first clearly stipulates what students should know, what they should be able to do, and what attitudes or values are desirable at the end of the lesson. Guided by the theme “Passions”, the learning outcome of this unit is defined as “talking about one's own passions and interests fluently”. Considering the reality of the gap between Chinese and western cultures and values, the moral outcome is defined as “appreciating the aesthetic beauty of Chinese folk songs”, which is intended to guide students to understand the traditional Chinese culture and build up a national confidence. With these outcomes as a guide, the teaching is constructed to provide students with an equal opportunity to actualize the outcomes.

**Step Two: Introduction of the outcomes:** It is definitely necessary for teachers to expound on the predetermined outcomes to all students what they are to achieve at the end of the lesson. Students would get a clear idea of the scope and structure of the content presented to them through which they will develop the knowledge, skills, and values defined by the outcomes, of the learning activities they are to engage in, and of the evaluation ways in which they are assessed. According to the topic of the unit “Passions”, the teacher raises a question: Which genre of Chinese music do you like best? Then the teacher elicits various answers relevant to traditional music genres in China. Next, based on students' replies, the teacher proposes the specific outcome “talking about one's own passions and interests fluently”.

Step Three: Implementation of the outcomes: This step is to organize teaching to achieve predetermined outcomes, which is supposed to emphasize the activities in which students will engage. All teaching efforts are aimed at helping students achieve significant learning outcomes. This means that the curriculum can be designed as student-centered, which has to be flexible so that students can participate in appropriate learning activities which best suit their understanding or mastery. A range of teaching strategies such as teacher instruction, whole-class discussion, group work, individual research can be employed flexibly. Whatever strategies of teaching are taken, learners should be always at the center of the whole education process. In the lesson, co-operative learning is the key. Specifically, students are divided into several groups, two or three for each group. All groups work together to search for some information and go to the library for reference books about Chinese folk music. They are prepared to make a presentation on the theme in group. Activities all take place under the guidance of the teacher.

Step Four: Presentation and evaluation of the outcomes: The most important feature of outcomes-based education is that all students are expected to be successful (Kirren, 2020, p. 9). Whether the student learning is successful or not will be seen at this stage. The evaluation of the curriculum lies in whether the outcomes are significant, meaningful, and appropriate. Students' achievement of particular outcomes must be considered from the aspects of knowledge and language skills. Equally important, their attitudes and group spirit relevant to the moral outcomes are also assessed. Teachers must strive to provide expanded opportunities to present themselves for students. At this stage, students should present their outcomes about "Passion" in class. Each group gives a presentation about Chinese traditional culture within limited minutes. Diverse methods of evaluation are adopted such as self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and teacher's evaluation. Specific assessments include the content of Chinese culture, the fluency and cohesion of speech, the layout of PPT, the engagement and cooperation of group members, etc. After the presentation, a summary including supportive approvals and advice for improvement will be drawn by the teacher. The following are excerpts of one group's presentation.

Excerpt One: Chinese traditional folk music refers to the traditional Chinese music played by Chinese traditional instruments in the form of solo and ensemble. Chinese folk music has a long history.

Excerpt Two: From the Western Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, some musical instruments such as Sheng, Yu were popularized. At that time, musicians such as Shi Juan and Shi Kuang emerged, as well as the famous zither music "Mountain" and "Water". Various genres and forms in modern times are the inheritance and development of traditional forms.

Excerpt Three: Zhuang ethnic group: Zhuang people are world-famous for their ability to sing and dance. They use songs to tell things, and express their feelings and emotions. Guangxi is also known as the "sea of songs". The Sanyuesan Festival, on March 3rd, is the largest song fair festival in Zhuang area. It is said that it is a folk commemorative festival formed to commemorate Liu Sanjie. Liu Sanjie is a Zhuang folk songbird.

Through the presentation students achieve some desired outcomes: In language, they obtain some vocabulary about music genres and they know some speaking skills; in humanity, they "appreciate traditional Chinese folk music" by introducing the music of various ethnic groups in Guangxi, China and the traditional music of their hometown in English, especially the various Zhuang ballads. They are encouraged to express their lives and feelings through music. In group work, they build on some discussions through which some less tangible qualities like self-confidence and team spirit implied in the presentation are strengthened. Such curriculum design not only promotes Guangxi's national culture, but also realizes the internal unity of teaching English language

skills and cultivating positive values in college English classes. Through various flexible teaching designs, teachers enable students to receive relevant ideological and political education. Hence, students' comprehensive competence of English application ability, cross-cultural communication ability, independent learning ability, and cultural literacy has been improved in the educational process.

### Teacher Responsibility

Under the guidance of OBE concept, to achieve the desired outcomes successfully, teachers need to shift from traditional role of being an instructor who simply transmits knowledge to a guider and curriculum designer who assists students to turn information into their own knowledge, a facilitator of learning who manages and collaborates student learning. In moral education, teachers act as the culture disseminator to stimulate students' interest in understanding traditional Chinese culture.

Teachers must prepare students adequately so that they can succeed (Kirren, 2020, p. 10). Teachers have proper, rather too high, expectations so that students can strive to measure up to them, which help build up their self-esteem and confidence. Teachers should estimate students' learning difficulties that students might face according to their conditions and try to minimize them. Some enlightenment from teachers may facilitate student learning to achieve the outcomes.

Student progress is always the first concern in any educational process. All students in OBE are expected to become a better self and play their role best. Hence, encouragements and inspiration from teachers will enhance student motivation for improvement. Students are allowed to make mistakes, which is part of learning. Sufficient opportunities for practicing new skills are helpful to fortify student learning power.

### Conclusion

Education is the way to cultivate talents. In College English teaching, teachers need to shoulder the double missions of transmitting knowledge and spreading Chinese culture by exploring the ideological and political elements in the textbooks and incorporating them into language learning. Students accept western culture and, at the same time, inherit Chinese excellent culture, enrich personal knowledge reserves, and strengthen cultural value, so that they can truly become people with international vision and Chinese soul. This is the ultimate goal of integrating Chinese culture into College English teaching on the basis of OBE.

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