

A Study on OBE Teaching Design for College English Guided by “Telling China’s Stories Well”

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Abstract: *Guided by the requirement of telling China’s stories well, this paper constructs an integrated college English teaching system based on OBE backward design. It establishes four categories of bilingual learning resources and a three-level assessment system encompassing process, outcome and developmental evaluation, with an aerospace-themed unit for law majors adopted as a practical teaching case. The framework focused in this paper improves students’ cultural reserves and cross-cultural narrative competence. Restricted by single-discipline samples, the model needs further multi-major trials for wider application.*

Keywords: OBE, “Telling China’s stories well”, College English, Cross-cultural Competence.

1. Introduction

It is clearly stated in the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China that we must develop our own discourse and narrative systems. Young students should be capable of presenting China’s development to the world. And this is the responsibilities of universities. Meanwhile, the Guidelines for College English Teaching (2020 Edition) specifies that college English classrooms should boost students’ cultural confidence [1]. And after that they can equip them with the competence to introduce local culture in English.

At present, in many universities, English teaching largely revolves around CET-4 and CET-6 exam preparation. And daily classroom activities are confined to basic linguistic training, including vocabulary, grammar and text translation; and few classroom activities simulate real cross-cultural communication scenarios. What’s more, there is rarely a comprehensive teaching framework centering the core mission of “telling China’s stories well”; teaching materials in class are rarely linked to students’ majors or local cultural features. In this way, students are able to comprehend foreign texts, but they will struggle to introduce China in English.

Under this background, Outcome-Based Education (OBE) offers an effective solution. The core logic is to define the practical competencies of students first, and then design course objectives, teaching contents, in-class tasks and assessment criteria in reverse. And all teaching activities serve the ultimate learning outcomes. And this paper takes “telling China’s stories well” as the core educational objective. And it constructs a complete teaching framework following the design logic of OBE.

2. Overall OBE Design Framework Guided by “Telling China’s Stories Well”

The entire teaching design revolves around “telling China’s stories well”. And it sticks to three core OBE principles — backward design, tiered implementation and continuous optimization. An integrated teaching system was built across four dimensions: educational objectives, supporting teaching materials, classroom implementation procedures and assessment methods.

2.1 Educational Objectives

The curriculum sets four clear learning outcomes for students to achieve by the end of the course. Students gain solid English expression skills through this design. They can not only introduce traditional Chinese culture accurately in English, but also combine their legal expertise while sharing stories about China’s legal development. Besides, they are supposed to introduce local industrial development in Hubei Province as hometown stories. Interpreting trending contemporary events is another outcome, such as aerospace engineering, people’s livelihood development and international cooperation in English.

These four core goals set the overall standard for the whole teaching plan. Course reading materials, in-class activities and grading rules no longer lean heavily on foreign content. And they will not ignore students’ ability to express Chinese culture in English—a common flaw in traditional English teaching. Every lesson has layered learning goals. It helps students to build cultural confidence and take initiative to share China’s stories globally. In this way, language skill practice and cultural value education move forward side by side.

The course follows three core guiding ideas and uses backward design. We set students’ mastery of the four key abilities as our final target. Starting from this end goal, we broke down layered targets step by step: cross-cultural communication graduation standards from the school’s training plan, general storytelling goals for the whole course, and separate learning objectives for each teaching unit.

2.2 Supporting Teaching Materials

We created a four-category bilingual resource library to fit the storytelling learning targets. It is integrated into pre-class, in-class and after-class learning phases, and is specially designed for students of a specific major.

The basic material library collects short bilingual texts. And these texts cover aerospace technology and traditional Chinese culture. All resources are officially released on the Learning Power platform. These texts help students build basic language skills to tell general Chinese stories.

Major-specific material library mainly stores bilingual cases. To be specific, it centers cases related to students' majors. Students can blend their professional knowledge into English storytelling with these materials. Local material library is built to offer bilingual news covering Wuhan National Aerospace Industrial Base, the Tianchu Constellation and so on. It provides rich local content for students to share regional stories [2]. Updating bilingual news is usually sorted into current affairs material library. It covers major events between 2025 and 2026, such as manned lunar missions and China-Pakistan astronaut cooperation. These contents suit storytelling tasks for international communication and current affairs sharing.

All four types of materials have two difficulty levels: beginner versions with simple short sentences and advanced versions with complete arguments. They are used in every stage. This setup solves the weaknesses of traditional teaching materials, which are too broad and fail to connect with students' majors and local regional features.

2.3 Classroom Implementation Procedures

Relying on three digital learning tools — Xuexitong, U-Campus and iWrite, we constructed a complete online-and-offline teaching process centered on storytelling practice. In pre-class online sessions, students learn key words for storytelling and get familiar with assigned reading materials. Teachers assign bilingual readings and vocabulary matching tests. They also check error records from the platforms to find out which vocabulary points most students struggle with, then adjust the key points for in-person class. Lessons focus on oral storytelling training during in-class offline sessions. Students take part in simulated speeches and comparative group talks. We also supply sentence templates for learners with different language levels. After the class, students finish extra online practice tasks, including written stories and short storytelling videos. All their storytelling works count toward the final course grade, which fully carries out the layered teaching ideas of OBE.

2.4 Assessment and Evaluation Methods

This course does not only judge students by a single final written test. It sets up a three-level evaluation system covering daily learning processes, finished learning works and long-term ability improvement, and produces numerical data to help teachers keep refining teaching plans.

Process evaluation relies on data collected from learning platforms. These platforms automatically gather objective learning records. The data includes material browsing frequency and online forum participation. It also covers pre-class vocabulary quiz scores and homework submission status. These records show the whole picture of students' self-directed learning. By outcome evaluation, tasks, e.g. English themed speeches, cultural articles and professional case analyses centered on storytelling, directly check how well each OBE teaching unit works. We use standardized cross-cultural competence questionnaires at the start and end of the semester. This is developmental evaluation. This long-term tracking records students' progress in telling China's culture stories and communicating across cultures.

Data from the three evaluation parts work together. They offer credible numerical evidence for adjusting single-unit teaching arrangements and upgrading the whole course.

3. Characteristics of the Teaching Design

This teaching design centers on the core teaching goal of "telling China's stories well". It uses OBE backward design logic to build a cohesive and unified college English teaching system. All supporting reading materials, storytelling tasks and grading standards are created around the core ability of expressing Chinese culture in English, forming a complete and logical theoretical framework [3]. The aerospace textbook unit serves as a practical and operable teaching example. It features clear layered pre-class, in-class and after-class storytelling procedures that frontline teachers can directly adopt. Four levels of differentiated bilingual materials suit students from various majors and with different English levels. Meanwhile, the three-tier evaluation system allows teachers to adjust and optimize teaching content continuously. It matches the current direction of education reform that stresses evaluating students' full-process growth.

4. OBE Teaching Design Example for the Aerospace-Themed Unit

This chapter takes Unit 1 from Book 4 (the 4th Edition) of New Horizon College English as a full case. It follows through the complete backward design process guided by OBE, whose core goal is to get students to tell Chinese stories independently in English. The whole process covers breaking down unit learning goals, arranging online pre-class, in-person class and after-class tasks step by step, and building exclusive evaluation rules for this unit. The final product is a standardized, repeatable teaching template for general college English lessons.

We set three progressive levels of storytelling goals for this unit. At the first level, delivering a complete 3–5 minute formal international presentation is the priority. The speech targets foreign legal practitioners and covers China's aerospace progress, Wuhan's commercial aerospace industry and aerospace legal issues. Students also need to objectively compare aerospace development paths at home and abroad, and actively share China's idea of peaceful space exploration. At the skill level, it is supposed to finish aerospace-themed English speeches of different levels, as well as argumentative essays on aerospace legal topics on their own. At last, the basic knowledge goal is to master bilingual words and phrases about aerospace, law and local aerospace industries in Jingchu regions. They can independently understand graded bilingual aerospace reading materials from our resource library.

We design all teaching materials, in-class activities and after-school homework for this unit backward, fully around these three layers of learning goals.

Two days before offline class, teachers release online pre-class tasks through Xuexitong. These tasks help students accumulate bilingual storytelling materials and hit the basic knowledge targets. We share aerospace reading materials at the same time, i.e. basic passages about the Shenzhou manned spacecraft program and human spaceflight engineering, and

advanced resources introducing Wuhan's China Star Valley, legal disputes over the Shenzhou-15 logo, and news about China-Pakistan astronaut cooperation. Students also take a self-check quiz on aerospace cultural knowledge. Teachers spot common weak points from quiz answers and adjust the key teaching points for offline lessons. Students must post a short English introduction to China's aerospace achievements in the class forum. Students with weaker English only need to finish basic vocabulary drills, while more capable learners browse all extended storytelling resources. This setup follows OBE's layered teaching idea to suit students with different language levels.

All offline class activities highlight oral storytelling of Chinese culture, split into four connected progressive sessions. They begin with material analysis. Teachers review standard English expressions for aerospace and legal topics based on mistakes from online quizzes. They compare the storytelling logic of Chinese and foreign aerospace texts in the textbook, and offer ready-to-use speech templates for students of all levels. Then comes the layered group storytelling drills. Students work in groups to simulate presentations for overseas exchange students about Wuhan commercial aerospace and aerospace intellectual property cases. Each group assigns different roles, such as main speakers, legal case analysts and foreign audience representatives. Groups grade each other's speeches against the storytelling scoring sheet. Teachers walk around the classroom to fix language and logic mistakes in students' introductions of Chinese culture. Students hold small-group English talks in cross-cultural critical discussion. They are to talk about differences between Chinese and global aerospace cooperation models. Teachers guide them to objectively explain China's peaceful space development concept with bilingual excerpts from the Outer Space Treaty. To wrap up, teachers sort out common language and logic errors from students' aerospace speeches, unify standard English translations of China-specific terms, and share high-quality speech outlines to guide students' after-class writing tasks.

After class, two types of extended storytelling homework are posted on online platforms, and their scores count toward the unit's overall grade. Every student writes a 100-120 word explanatory essay about China's aerospace development via the iWrite writing platform. Advanced students produce 2-3 minute English short videos that introduce Jingchu's local aerospace industry, focusing on the Wuhan Aerospace Industrial Base. Students grade their own work after submission, and teachers write targeted feedback on each student's storytelling logic and expressions of Chinese culture. The learning platform saves all homework and forum posts as objective data for process evaluation. Teachers use these records to find flaws in the current teaching plan and improve OBE designs for later units.

After running this full OBE teaching framework, I analyzed its teaching effects from four angles: formal test scores, cross-cultural competence questionnaire results, online learning records, and student questionnaires plus interviews. Numerical data and students' personal feedback are referenced to show real changes in classroom learning.

When comparing pre-semester placement tests and

end-of-term assessments, overall scores rose noticeably. This proves the backward-designed teaching framework effectively fixes students' weakness in introducing Chinese culture in English. The biggest improvements appeared in writing essays about Chinese stories and translating legal professional expressions, which directly shows storytelling practice works well and lifts students' overall English output ability.

Complete questionnaire data shows average scores increased across all six dimensions of cross-cultural competence. Students made the most obvious progress in three aspects. They built up richer knowledge of native Chinese culture and grew more willing to spread Chinese stories to global audiences. Their practical skills for cross-cultural communication also got greatly enhanced. These improvements closely match the core course goal of "telling China's stories well".

Over the whole unit learning, each student checked bilingual aerospace materials 16.3 times on average. And they posted 8 times on forums discussing Chinese cultural stories. The completion rate for all storytelling homework hit 90%. These objective online learning records are not affected by students' subjective self-judgments. They back up test and questionnaire results. And they further confirm that layered teaching encourages students to practice telling China's stories in English on their own initiative.

Questionnaire feedback shows more than 80% of students recognized the value of storytelling tasks in this aerospace unit, including English speeches and short video production. Students said the bilingual resource library solved two major learning troubles. They no longer struggled with standard English translations of unique Chinese terms, and they now have complete sample texts to reference when sharing local cultural stories. Meanwhile, a small group of students with limited English said speech assignments were too hard. They put forward practical suggestions for future adjustments, such as simpler layered speech templates and step-by-step training exercises. All these comments reveal both the strengths and areas to polish in the current teaching design.

5. Core Innovations and Limitations

This design clearly define "telling China's stories well" as the ultimate learning goal. It constructs a backward design framework that covers overall storytelling objectives, layered unit learning targets and full-cycle classroom arrangements. This framework makes up for a noticeable blank in existing OBE English studies. Most earlier research centered merely on basic language drills. Little attention was paid to students' capacity to convey Chinese culture across different cultures.

We develop a multi-source data system that combines online learning records, unit storytelling assignments and standardized cross-cultural competence questionnaires. This system supports continuous teaching optimization and enriches quantitative empirical research on OBE college English teaching with telling China's stories as the core.

But this teaching design only carried out teaching trials on law majors. The bilingual aerospace materials and speech tasks

are customized for aerospace legal scenarios. We have not yet built specialized storytelling resource libraries and differentiated unit teaching plans for multiple majors. Different disciplines set different standards for students' cross-cultural storytelling ability, so the existing framework cannot fully fit the learning demands of all majors. We also lack comparative data that tracks students' storytelling progress across different disciplines [4]. Further controlled teaching experiments covering multiple majors are needed to verify whether this teaching model can be widely applied.

6. Conclusion

In response to the requirement of integrating curriculum ideological and political education around "telling China's stories well" [5], this paper applies OBE backward design theory to construct an integrated college English teaching system. The framework consists of three core components. It supplies bilingual storytelling materials to support students' narrative practice. Alongside these resources, it applies an integrated online-offline teaching model for consistent learning arrangements. A three-tier evaluation system is also established within this framework, which covers process assessment, outcome assessment and long-term developmental assessment. We measured students' abilities before and after the semester. Wu Weiping's localized cross-cultural competence scale served as the main measuring tool. We collected multiple types of evidence to cross-check the results. The supporting data came from student questionnaires, online learning logs and a full written exam. This written exam asked students to express Chinese stories in English. It effectively solves four typical problems existing in traditional college English teaching: over-reliance on foreign texts, insufficient specialized materials for telling China's culture, disconnection between classroom learning and language output, and evaluation systems that cannot drive continuous teaching optimization. This paper produces a set of practical achievements, including layered bilingual material libraries, complete OBE unit lesson plans, collections of excellent student storytelling works and supporting research papers, which meet the preset research deliverables of this project.

Overall, the storytelling-oriented OBE teaching framework, standardized textbook unit implementation model and complete evaluation toolkit proposed in this paper provide solid theoretical references, reliable quantitative empirical data and ready-to-use classroom operation templates for general English teaching at local undergraduate universities nationwide. They help schools systematically advance curriculum ideological and political education centered on telling China's stories and promote standardized OBE teaching reform in college English.

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