

Exploration of Talent Training Model for Higher Education Major in Universities Based on OBE Concept

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of higher education reform, the traditional education model is clearly no longer suitable for the current talent training needs. The OBE (Outcome-Based Education) concept is an outcome-oriented educational philosophy. Constructing a talent training model for the higher education major based on this concept can optimize the curriculum structure, improve teaching methods, and promote the scientific and professional development of teaching in the higher education major. Based on this, this paper first briefly clarifies the OBE educational concept and its characteristics, sorts out the alignment between this concept and the talent training of the higher education major, and proposes strategies for constructing the talent training model of the higher education major, hoping to provide useful references for relevant educators.

Keywords: OBE concept; Higher education major; Talent training model

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1. Introduction

In the new era, higher education has increasingly emphasized the construction of undergraduate majors. How to promote the reform and innovation of higher education and improve the quality of talent training has become the focus of attention from all sectors of society. The “Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Undergraduate Education and Teaching to Comprehensively Improve the Quality of Talent Training” issued in 2019 pointed out that it is necessary to comprehensively improve the quality of undergraduate education and teaching and strengthen the function of cultivating talents through scientific research. Similarly, “China’s Education Modernization 2035” proposes to pay attention to prominent issues in education development to promote the high-level and high-quality popularization of education at all levels and types. Against this background, various universities have paid more attention to the construction of undergraduate majors and the reform of talent training, aiming to comprehensively improve the quality of talent training and cultivate high-quality talents who meet the needs of the education industry.

The higher education major is a core major in normal undergraduate education, shouldering the important mission of providing high-quality teachers for primary and secondary schools and promoting the development of education disciplines. The OBE concept centers on students, is oriented by outcomes, and focuses on improving students' practical abilities as well as cultivating their knowledge and literacy. This concept provides a new perspective for universities to cultivate application-oriented talents. Therefore, adhering to the OBE concept and exploring the talent training model for the higher education major in universities is of great significance for the all-round development of students and the improvement of the quality of talents in the higher education major.

2. OBE educational philosophy and its characteristics

2.1. Philosophy

The OBE (Outcomes-based Education) educational philosophy was proposed in 1981, and since then, it has attracted continuous attention and exploration from a large number of experts and scholars. This philosophy has been widely applied worldwide and has gradually formed a comprehensive theoretical system. In the field of higher education and talent cultivation in some developed countries, the OBE educational philosophy has become a mainstream educational concept ^[1].

As an advanced educational philosophy, the core connotation of OBE can be summarized in five aspects:

- (1) It upholds the concept of "success for all". The OBE philosophy holds that every student has the potential to succeed, and teachers need to provide students with personalized learning opportunities to help them achieve their learning goals and ensure that all students can achieve success in their studies.
- (2) It implements personalized assessment and respects individual differences among students. The OBE philosophy emphasizes that each student is an independent individual, and teachers should formulate exclusive assessment standards and methods based on students' different learning progress and ability development.
- (3) It focuses on learning proficiency. Teaching evaluation should be based on students' mastery of the learned content, and teachers need to ensure that students fully understand and grasp the knowledge and skills.
- (4) It clarifies performance responsibilities. Under the OBE philosophy, schools and students jointly assume the responsibility for learning outcomes: schools are responsible for providing high-quality teaching resources and environments, while students need to actively participate in learning and pursue learning achievements.
- (5) It adheres to competence-based education. The OBE philosophy holds that education should be oriented towards cultivating students' ability to adapt to future life. In the cultivation of talents in the education major, it is necessary to clearly list the core competencies that students should possess, formulate requirements for each competence, and match corresponding courses, to ensure that what students learn is closely related to industry needs and social development.

2.2. Characteristics

The OBE (Outcome-Based Education) philosophy of education possesses the following characteristics:

- (1) It is student-centered. The OBE philosophy emphasizes highlighting the student's dominant role, and teachers should design teaching sessions based on understanding students' needs and interests ^[2].
- (2) It is outcome-oriented. The OBE philosophy aims to promote the all-round development of students in terms

of knowledge, literacy, and skills by designing appropriate teaching content and objectives. Teachers need to take the cultivation of students' learning outcomes and practical application abilities as the core teaching goals, and design teaching activities and evaluation methods around these goals. By setting specific learning objectives, constructing a teaching process that matches them, and establishing a corresponding evaluation system, the achievements and performance of students can be objectively measured ^[3]. Based on evaluation feedback, teachers should promptly adjust teaching strategies, optimize teaching methods and content, and ensure that students can truly achieve the expected learning outcomes.

- (3) It takes sustainable development as its purpose. The OBE philosophy emphasizes not only students' current academic performance but also values their long-term development. Therefore, teachers need to consider how to cultivate students' innovative abilities, critical thinking, and collaborative abilities, to lay the groundwork for students' long-term development and promote their all-around development.

3. The alignment between the OBE educational philosophy and the talent development of the pedagogy major

3.1. At the level of training objectives

The pedagogy major aims to cultivate high-quality talents who possess advanced educational concepts, good professional ethics, and strong educational theoretical literacy, and who are competent in educational teaching, educational management, educational research, and other work. This is to meet the development needs of the education sector and serve society ^[4]. However, the traditional training objectives of the pedagogy major are vague, and there is a disconnect between these objectives and the needs of primary and secondary school teachers. The OBE (Outcome-Based Education) philosophy, which is outcome-oriented and emphasizes meaningful learning, is highly aligned with the core demand of the pedagogy major for cultivating talents that meet industry needs. By clarifying learning outcomes, the pedagogy major can formulate more detailed and precise talent training objectives to meet students' learning needs and society's expectations for graduates of the pedagogy major ^[5].

3.2. At the level of the curriculum system

The curriculum system for talent development in the pedagogy major usually consists of three modules: general education, professional education, and personalized education. It aims to cultivate students' basic theoretical literacy, teaching skills, teaching research capabilities, and teaching innovation capabilities ^[6]. The OBE educational philosophy extends its focus beyond the classroom and emphasizes establishing a close connection between curriculum content and real-life needs. This philosophy requires educators to clearly plan the expected learning outcomes of students at the beginning of teaching design, and then design courses, organize teaching, and implement evaluations around this goal. The curriculum system of the pedagogy major needs to address issues such as the positioning of teaching objectives and teaching optimization strategies, and the OBE educational philosophy can provide solutions to these issues. There is an inherent correlation and complementarity between the two, which can promote the development of the curriculum system in a more comprehensive and efficient direction ^[7].

3.3. At the level of evaluation system

The talent development evaluation system of the pedagogy major aims to ensure that the quality of

talent development is consistent with the expected objectives. The OBE philosophy aims to ensure the comprehensiveness of the evaluation perspective by establishing an evaluation mechanism involving multiple stakeholders such as employers, schools, and parents. Under the guidance of this philosophy, universities can track the entire process, record students' learning trajectories from enrollment to graduation, conduct precise evaluations based on different course objectives and graduation requirements, and control the quality of talent output. Additionally, it regularly examines the implementation of course exercises and course objectives, and quantifies the contribution of courses to graduation indicator points^[8]. Integrating the OBE philosophy into the pedagogy major can enhance the authority and objectivity of evaluation results and promote the connection between the talent development of the pedagogy major and social needs^[9].

4. Construction strategies for the talent training model of the pedagogy major based on the OBE concept

4.1. Highlight reverse design and clarify talent training objectives

One of the characteristics of the teaching model based on the OBE (Outcome-Based Education) concept is “reverse design”, which means reversely designing training objectives according to learning outcomes and focusing on the actual achievements students gain during the learning process^[10]. Under the guidance of the OBE concept, the pedagogy major needs to clarify its training objectives based on market demands and the needs of employers. Specifically, first, it should align with the demands of the market and employers, and set talent training objectives and graduation requirements accordingly; second, it should conduct timely research on the labor market, grasp the changes in society's demand for pedagogy professionals, and clarify the training objectives and positioning based on discipline development^[11]. To this end, the pedagogy major should form an expert team consisting of education industry experts, frontline teachers, and backbone personnel in pedagogy management to refine talent training objectives and graduation requirements, so as to scientifically evaluate the achievement of talent training goals.

4.2. Optimize the curriculum system and improve the quality of talent training

The construction of the curriculum system is the carrier of talent training and the key to achieving talent training objectives. Therefore, in combination with the OBE concept, the curriculum system should be comprehensively optimized based on graduation requirements and training objectives, and a curriculum matrix composed of general education courses, professional basic courses, professional core courses, elective courses, and practical teaching should be built. In the optimization process, the following aspects should be focused on:

- (1) In terms of curriculum structure, the proportion of class hours for theoretical courses can be appropriately reduced, and the class hours for practical courses can be increased accordingly—for example, adding practical course modules such as educational internships and the application of educational technology—to guide students to apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned to real teaching scenarios^[12].
- (2) In terms of curriculum content, cutting-edge knowledge should be integrated, such as artificial intelligence, blended teaching, and the latest cases of education and curriculum reform, to ensure that the teaching content is in line with social development.
- (3) In terms of teaching methods, the pedagogy major can implement small-class teaching to increase interaction between teachers and students and create a better learning environment for students. At the same time, introduce project-based learning and problem-oriented learning, with real educational

problems as the driving force, to guide students to carry out independent inquiry and collaborative learning, thereby cultivating their innovative ability and collaborative ability^[13].

- (4) Curriculum design should break down professional barriers, build a “university-school” joint training base, promote the integration of theory and practice, as well as the integration of teaching research and teaching, and enhance the diversity and effectiveness of the curriculum.

On this basis, to support the optimized implementation of the curriculum system, it is also necessary to simultaneously build a supporting teaching resource database: select high-quality teaching materials that meet the curriculum objectives, and develop various forms of digital teaching resources such as micro-courses and teaching case databases; strengthen the construction of laboratories and practical bases—for example, building smart education laboratories and co-constructing internship bases with high-quality primary and secondary schools—to provide guarantee for talent training.

4.3. Establish a continuous improvement mechanism and improve the quality evaluation system

Guided by the OBE (Outcome-Based Education) philosophy, a cyclic evaluation mechanism of “evaluation, feedback, improvement, and re-evaluation” can be established to address the drawbacks of traditional teaching models^[14].

- (1) For the education major, an evaluation framework should be built covering such dimensions as talent cultivation objectives, graduation requirements, the richness of curriculum resources, and the effectiveness of quality management and monitoring.
- (2) Innovation in evaluation methods should be oriented toward learning outcomes, and more diversified assessment tools should be adopted. Specifically, students can be organized to write research reports, or be encouraged to actively participate in in-class presentations and discussions for assessment purposes. This ensures that the evaluation runs through the entire process of students’ learning. Such an approach not only stimulates students’ innovation capabilities and enhances their practical skills but also enables teachers to track students’ growth and gain a comprehensive understanding of their development.
- (3) The university may set up a dedicated leading group responsible for overall planning and coordinating resources and efforts from various parties. Specifically, the leading group should systematically formulate a development plan for the education major, clarify specific tasks for each phase, implement a target responsibility system, and assign responsibilities to individual staff members.

4.4. Jointly promote the dual-mentor system throughout the cultivation process and strengthen the building of the teaching staff

The dual-mentor system can effectively integrate on-campus and off-campus educational resources, enabling students to achieve all-around development under the guidance of both on-campus and off-campus mentors. Typically, the primary mentor is an on-campus teacher, while the collaborative mentor is an interdisciplinary professional, an off-campus expert, or a practitioner from relevant industries. The advantages of this system lie in improving the quality of student cultivation, promoting cooperation between teaching and research teams, advancing university-enterprise collaboration, and fostering talents that meet the needs of industries^[15]. To give full play to the advantages of the dual-mentor system, mentors from both sides need to cooperate closely: they should jointly formulate talent cultivation plans, scientifically design the theoretical curriculum system, link theoretical courses with practical courses, and align the curriculum with the needs of educational positions in

schools. Throughout the cultivation process, the two parties must maintain communication, regularly exchange information on students' learning progress and performance, and provide solutions to problems arising during this process. In addition, to improve the professional competence and teaching ability of teachers in the education major and strengthen the teaching team, the university needs to enhance the training of on-campus teachers through special training programs, academic seminars, and other initiatives. At the same time, it should strengthen the introduction of outstanding talents, give full play to the main role of employers, improve the scientificity and targeting of talent introduction, and enrich the existing teaching staff.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the OBE (Outcome-Based Education) concept has currently attracted the attention of a large number of educators and has become a scientific direction for pursuing excellence in education and teaching. Against the backdrop of educational reform, guiding the teaching reform of the pedagogy major with the OBE concept can highlight the dominant position of students, attach importance to their personalized development, and provide them with appropriate learning opportunities. This enables every student to gain knowledge and grow, thereby cultivating more high-quality educational talents.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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