

# Theory teaching and cultivation of students' transferable abilities in art and design programs under the concept of OBE

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to explore the implementation strategy of integrating the concept of outcome-based education (OBE) into the theory courses of art and design majors in colleges and universities. By analyzing the core elements of the OBE teaching concept of taking students as the main body, which is goal-and-ability-oriented, and combining the characteristics of theoretical course teaching of art and design majors, this paper puts forward the central idea of reconstructing the evaluation system of the theoretical course teaching of art majors, with special emphasis on the cultivation of "transferable" abilities. We have deepened the internal logic of modularized curriculum design, implemented project-based learning practices, deepened and expanded the strategies of reflective learning and interdisciplinary integration. These approaches will enhance students' transferable skills such as critical thinking, innovative design, teamwork, project management, etc., which lay a solid foundation for their future development. Through step-by-step empirical and theoretical research, this paper verifies the effectiveness and feasibility of the OBE teaching concept in the theoretical courses of art and design majors.

**Key words:** OBE teaching philosophy; learning transferability; art and design; self-assessment

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background and significance of the study

The theoretical courses of art design majors play a significant role in the professional development of students, which aims to assess the effectiveness of OBE application in art and design theory courses and its potential impact on the development of students' transferable competencies. The term "transferable competence" refers to the generalizability of previously trained competencies across different domains, the continuity of the competencies over time and with the increase of individual experience, and the transferability of the competencies that can change with the change of the industry in the context of situational transfer. The "transferable ability" is often used in the evaluation of human vocational ability, but the accumulation of this ability is often related to its cognitive and experiential depth in the early stage of social growth. The university environment simulates the social environment of students, and fundamentally, the performance of students after entering society should be the ultimate service goal of school education. In fact, the performance of students' social competence is the ultimate yardstick of the evaluation system of school education. Paying more attention to the "transferable ability" in education and teaching is an expansion of the ability-oriented OBE teaching concept. It includes

but is not limited to cultivating students' level of reflection, establishing the habit of self-assessment, and enhancing the ability of lifelong learning, etc [1].

### 1.2 Research purpose and problems

To explore how the application of OBE concepts in art and design theory courses can enhance students' transferable abilities, this paper focuses on how to set teaching goals, design interdisciplinary courses, implement project-based learning and establish a dynamic evaluation system to ensure that students acquire critical thinking, innovative design and other key competencies, which lay the foundation for a professional career.

### 1.3 Research methods and data sources

Select representative theory courses in the field of art and design, such as "Introduction to Art", as a reform pilot, and redesign the course objectives, teaching contents, teaching methods and evaluation methods based on the OBE concept. Through practical teaching, student feedback, teaching effect evaluation and other means, the reform plan is continuously optimized to form a promotable teaching mode.

Through reviewing domestic and international literature on the OBE teaching concepts, art and design education, and the cultivation of transferable ability, we sort out the relevant theories and practical experiences to provide theoretical support and practical reference for this study.

## **2 Implementation strategies for theory courses of art and design majors under OBE teaching concepts**

### 2.1 Reconstruction of theory teaching objectives in art and design programs under the OBE philosophy

#### 2.1.1 Define the ability objectives

Combining school standards and social needs, detailed competency objectives covering multiple dimensions such as vocational ability, communication skills, teamwork and lifelong learning are formulated, which aims to cultivate students' transfer learning ability and increase the proportion of comprehensive ability index.

#### 2.1.2 Construct the teaching framework

With the competency goals as the core, it is needed to construct an OBE-oriented teaching framework, especially an interdisciplinary teaching framework, to increase the interaction between disciplines, between schools and society, which ensures that teaching activities are closely focused on competency cultivation.

#### 2.1.3 Formulate the implementation plan

According to the teaching framework, it is needed to refine the teaching plan for each semester, specify the teaching content, methods and assessment methods, which ensures the gradual achievement of the competency goals.

### 2.2 Interdisciplinary modularized curriculum design and cultivation of transferable abilities

Enhance the design of modularized interdisciplinary curriculum systems. In the theory courses of art and design majors, a curriculum system containing modules of aesthetic theory, psychology, design management, marketing, etc., can be constructed to cultivate students' cross-disciplinary thinking ability through cross-fertilization between modules.

Determine the logical relationship between modules. It means to clarify the intrinsic connection and sequence between modules to ensure that students can smoothly transition to the next one after completing the study of one module.

The primary issue to implement the establishment of an interdisciplinary curriculum system is the connection between teachers.

### 2.3 Practice and exploration of project-based learning (PBL) in OBE teaching

On the basis of the establishment of interdisciplinary modularized curriculum design, diversification and other teaching methods are gradually adopted in teaching to guide students to apply theoretical knowledge and solve practical

problems in module learning. Tasks are given based on the academic situation and students' individual abilities. Group task mode is adopted to achieve the purpose of teaching according to students' ability, and diversified tasks are carried out to give students the experience of upgrading and fighting monsters.

### 2.3.1 The practice of project-based learning (PBL) in OBE teaching

In the 24th autumn class of "Introduction to Art", case teaching, flipped classroom and project-based teaching were used interchangeably. First, based on the academic research and two weeks of homework and simple tasks, expected judgments of students' learning abilities and outcomes were made to construct class learning ability clusters as the basis for the development of an individualized learning plan. Then the 73 students in the two classes established three levels (Dream Team, Front Runners, and Wisdom Stars) with a total of eight task groups [2]. Each level has established a personalized learning path, starting with the same pre-study preparation materials, with different tasks and completion criteria.

The first project completed by the students in the course was titled "Crossing Borders", which was a reflection on "Artistic Periods and Styles" in the course "Introduction to Art". It was an open-ended project that allowed students to delve into the project from a variety of perspectives. When we set up the project, we expected that the "Dream Team", which has a general ability, would understand the textbook knowledge and have a basic knowledge and memory of the times and styles of art, while the "Front Runners" team, which accounts for the largest proportion of the students, was hoped to find a fusion or cases of fusion of the old and the new, and fusion of different styles in artworks of different times, so they could make use of the flipped classroom to complete the internalization of their knowledge. For the "Wisdom Stars", they were expected to make innovative breakthroughs, such as discovering the collision between different disciplines and the arts, seeing the potential of "cross-border integration" in contemporary art, and exploring "cross-border fusion" in contemporary art.

The final result was a pleasant surprise. Not only did the teams fulfill their expectations, but the "Wisdom Stars" team even created a simple cross-border artwork on their own.

### 2.3.2 The advantages of project-based learning (PBL) in OBE teaching

The formation of project teams for project-based learning, to a certain extent, eliminates the drawbacks of traditional unified teaching that can not be tailored to the needs of the students, and mobilizes the enthusiasm of the students, which is fully in line with the OBE's idea of taking the students as the main body. It allows students with certain learning ability to choose corresponding projects for study and in-depth research according to their own interests, ability needs and career planning. However, it also takes care of students with average learning ability. At the same time, it closely links the learning content with students' interests and real life, and activates students' enthusiasm for learning.

More importantly, PBL teaching can promote students to build the ability of deep thinking and learning, which mobilizes innovation as much as possible. Project-based learning requires students to use a variety of skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication and cooperation, time management, information gathering, etc., which are crucial for students' future career development.

### 2.3.3 Feasibility and operability of project-based teaching tasks

The project design combines theoretical learning and practical exploration, which not only meets the theoretical needs of the "Introduction to Art" course, but also embodies the practical orientation of the OBE teaching concept. Through group cooperation, case analysis, mid-term checking and adjustment, it ensures that students can gradually go deeper into the project and complete the creation of cross-media artworks.

Each link in the project has clear target requirements and evaluation methods, which makes it easy for students and teachers to track the progress and adjust the direction of creation in time. At the same time, the design of the project fully

considered the age characteristics and interests of students, and stimulated students' learning enthusiasm and creativity through the practical exploration of cross-media art.

Of course, the timeliness of the project is very important. Combining traditional art with cross-media art not only inherits the cultural essence, but also embodies the spirit of innovation. Through online or offline work display activities, it also provides a platform for students to display their talents and exchange ideas, which enhances the attractiveness and influence of the program.

## 2.4 Establishing a dynamic evaluation system to realize tailored education

### 2.4.1 Building a diversified evaluation system

With the continuous innovation of education methods, diversified teaching methods such as case study teaching, flipped classroom, project-based teaching come into being. The cross-use of these teaching methods not only enriches the teaching methods, but also puts forward new requirements for the evaluation system.

Case teaching focuses on students' analytical ability and problem solving ability in specific situations, so the evaluation method should focus on students' performance in case discussions, the points raised and the problem solving strategies. Flipped classroom, on the other hand, emphasizes students' independent learning and teamwork ability, and the evaluation should focus on students' pre-course preparation, class participation and teamwork results. Project-based teaching pays more attention to students' practical ability and innovative thinking, and the evaluation should focus on the degree of completion of the project, innovative points and students' practical reflection.

### 2.4.2 Setting scientific evaluation standards

Under the teaching concept of OBE (outcome-based education), the evaluation standards should be set closely around the competency objectives, reflecting comprehensiveness, hierarchy, operability and development. Visualizing and designing the evaluation system provides an easier way to identify and capture problems, and summarize course tasks through questionnaires and radar chart analysis to assess the transferability of student learning. This approach will greatly enhance the teaching effectiveness of teachers.

Comprehensiveness requires that the evaluation criteria should cover multiple dimensions such as cognition, skills and attitudes. The cognitive dimension mainly examines students' knowledge mastery; the skill dimension focuses on students' practical ability; the attitude dimension focuses on students' learning attitude and teamwork spirit. Such evaluation criteria can fully reflect the comprehensive quality of students and avoid the bias caused by one-sided evaluation. Hierarchy emphasizes the setting of differentiated evaluation standards for students with different abilities. For students with a weak foundation, the evaluation criteria should be relatively loose and focus on encouraging their progress; for students with outstanding abilities, the evaluation criteria should be more stringent in order to stimulate their potential. These differentiated evaluation standards can take care of the individual differences of students and realize tailor-made teaching.

Operability requires that the evaluation standards should be specific and clear, and easy to operate. Evaluation standards should avoid being too abstract or vague, but should be specific to each knowledge point, each skill or each attitude. Such evaluation criteria can make both teachers and students know clearly the content and requirements of evaluation, so that they can teach and learn more effectively. Development, on the other hand, requires that the evaluation criteria should be dynamically adjusted with changes in the teaching process and student abilities. As teaching progresses and students' abilities improve, the evaluation criteria should be raised accordingly. Such dynamically adjusted evaluation criteria can continuously motivate students to make progress and prevent them from stagnating or becoming slack.

## 2.5 Faculty building and training

### 2.5.1 Cultivate and introduce the interdisciplinary talents

With the rapid development of society and the ever-changing science and technology, the field of art and design is gradually integrating with other disciplinary fields, forming the trend of interdisciplinary development. On the one hand, schools can encourage existing teachers to engage in cross disciplinary learning and broaden their knowledge horizons through internal training. For example, teachers can be organized to participate in interdisciplinary seminars, workshops and other activities to promote exchanges and cooperation between different disciplines. At the same time, teachers can also be encouraged to participate in interdisciplinary research projects to explore the effective path of interdisciplinary teaching through practice [3]. On the other hand, schools should actively introduce outstanding talents with interdisciplinary backgrounds to enrich the diversity of the faculty. When recruiting new teachers, priority can be given to those candidates with interdisciplinary educational background or practical experience. The addition of these new teachers can not only bring new ideas and perspectives to the teaching team, but also provide students with a more comprehensive and diversified learning experience.

### 2.5.2 Conduct teacher training

Teacher training is an important part and an effective way to improve teaching quality. Under the OBE teaching concept, teacher training should pay more attention to practicality and pertinence to help teachers better understand and implement this teaching concept.

First, schools can regularly organize teachers to participate in OBE teaching concept related training to help them deeply understand the core ideas and implementation points of this concept. Through the training, teachers should be able to clarify the requirements for setting teaching objectives, selecting teaching content, using teaching methods and evaluating teaching methods under the OBE teaching philosophy, so as to provide theoretical guidance for teaching practice. Secondly, training should be carried out for specific teaching skills, such as curriculum design, classroom management, student assessment and so on. These skills training can help teachers improve their teaching practice and better cope with various challenges in teaching. For example, through curriculum design training, teachers can learn how to design a curriculum that meets students' needs and teaching objectives according to the OBE teaching concept; through classroom management training, teachers can master effective classroom management skills and create a positive learning atmosphere; through student assessment training, teachers can learn how to utilize diversified assessment methods to comprehensively and objectively evaluate students' learning outcomes.

### 2.5.3 Encourage teachers to conduct teaching research

Teaching research is an important way for teachers' professional growth and an important force to promote teaching reform and innovation. Under the OBE teaching concept, encouraging teachers to conduct teaching research is of great significance in improving teaching quality and promoting teaching reform. First, teaching research can help teachers deeply understand the problems and challenges in the teaching process and explore effective solutions. Through teaching research, teachers can reflect on and summarize their teaching practice, and discover the deficiencies and areas for improvement in teaching. At the same time, teachers can also explore teaching methods and strategies that are more in line with the OBE teaching philosophy, taking into account students' needs and feedback. These research results can not only provide guidance for teachers' teaching practice, but also provide reference for other teachers. Second, teaching research can promote communication and cooperation among teachers and form a favorable academic atmosphere. In the process of teaching research, teachers can have in-depth exchanges and discussions with colleagues, experts or scholars to jointly explore the problems and solutions in teaching. This kind of communication and cooperation can not only enhance the academic level of teachers, but also promote the formation and development of teaching teams.

### 3 Conclusion

In summary, there is a close correlation between the OBE teaching philosophy and the development of students' transferable competence. By being outcome-oriented, the OBE concept emphasizes the overall development of students' cognition, skills and attitudes, which provides a solid foundation for the formation of students' transferable abilities. In the theoretical courses of art and design majors, the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge, the adoption of project-based learning, and the encouragement of teamwork and communication effectively promote the enhancement of students' transferable competencies, such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. Meanwhile, reflective learning and lifelong learning occupy a central position in the OBE teaching philosophy. Reflective learning encourages students to constantly review their own learning process and results, so as to adjust their learning strategies and realize self-improvement. Lifelong learning, on the other hand, requires students to have the awareness and ability of continuous learning to adapt to the ever-changing needs of society. These two points not only help cultivate students' transferable abilities, but also lay a solid foundation for the long-term development of their career. In the future, the research on continuous improvement and expansion of the OBE teaching concept is still an important direction. With the continuous progress of educational technology and the diversification of social needs, how to further optimize the teaching mode, evaluation system and teacher training mechanism under the OBE teaching concept to better serve the cultivation of students' transferable competence and the realization of the goal of lifelong learning will be the subject of in-depth exploration in the future research.

#### Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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