



Development of College English Listening and Speaking Course Based on an Outcome-Based Education Approach Combined with Blended Learning to Enhance English Listening and Speaking Skills of Non-English Major Freshmen Students at Xi'an University

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Received 09/05/2024

Revised 14/06/2024

Accepted 13/08/2024

Abstract

Background and Aim: This study was a research and development of a College English Listening and Speaking Course. The objectives of this research were 1) To study the background information focusing on course components and existing problems of the College English Listening and Speaking Course. 2) To develop the components and quality of the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on an outcome-based education approach combined with blended learning. 3) To study the effectiveness of implementing College English Listening and Speaking Course based on outcome-based education combined with blended learning to enhance English listening and speaking skills of non-English major students.

Materials and Methods: The sample of this study was 40 non-English major freshmen students from Xi'an University, the People's Republic of China. They were derived by cluster random sampling. The instruments used in this research were 1) College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the outcome-based education approach combined with blended learning and its lesson plans, 2) English listening skills test with .88 of reliability, and 3) English speaking skills test with .74 of reliability 4) students' satisfaction questionnaire with .79 of reliability. The statistics used to analyze data included mean, standard deviation, and t-test for one sample.

Results: The research results found that 1) the background information of the College English Listening and Speaking Course and its current problems were principles, objectives, content, instructional strategy, media, and resource evaluation. 2) College English Listening and Speaking Course based on outcome-based education approach and blended learning consisted of 6 steps, that is, Step 1: Determine expected learning outcomes (OBE) Step 2: Design teaching activities(OBE) Step 3: Design teaching methods (blended learning) Step 4: Design teaching assessments (OBE and blended learning) Step 5: Continuous feedback and adaptation (OBE) Step 6: Reflection and improvement (OBE and blended learning) 3) the results of implementation of College English Listening and Speaking Course based on outcome-based education approach combined with blended learning found that (1) Students' English listening skills after using outcome-based education approach combined with blended learning method was higher than before at a statistically significant level of .01 ($M=24.35$, $SD=2.46$). (2) Students' English speaking skills after using an outcome-based education approach combined with the blended learning method were higher than before at a statistically significant level of .01 ($M=24.35$, $SD=2.46$). (3) The satisfaction of students after using the outcome-based education approach combined with the blended learning method was at a higher level ($M=4.11$, $SD=0.64$).

Conclusion: The developed College English Listening and Speaking Course based on an outcome-based education approach combined with blended learning has a significant effect on enhancing the English listening





and speaking skills of non-English major students at Xi'an University. Students are satisfied with the developed College English Listening and Speaking Course based on an outcome-based education approach combined with blended learning.

Keywords: College English Listening and Speaking Course; Outcome-Based Education Approach; Blended Learning; English Listening Skills; English Speaking Skills

Introduction

In 2007, the Education Ministry issued College English Curriculum Requirements, College English aims to cultivate students' comprehensive application ability, focus on listening and speaking, and improve their oral communication in social communication and daily work and study, to enhance their ability to study independently and to improve their general cultural awareness to meet the needs of China's social development and international exchanges. Requirements not only stress the importance of developing students' listening and speaking skills but also highlight the necessity for colleges and universities to remold the unitary teacher-centered teaching model by introducing computer-based and classroom-based teaching models with the help of multimedia and network technology. This model has implied the concept of Blended Learning in the following four aspects: the combination of lecturing in a big class and practicing in a small class; the combination of classroom teaching and students' autonomous learning; the combination of multimedia teaching and network teaching; the combination of the first classroom teaching and second classroom activities. (The College English Curriculum Requirements, 2004).

However, the current situation of College English listening and speaking teaching is not satisfactory. Many non-English major college students face challenges with their English listening and speaking skills. Despite being exposed to English classes throughout their academic journey, they often struggle to communicate effectively in the language. This deficiency stems from various factors such as limited exposure to authentic English-speaking environments, inadequate practice opportunities, and a lack of confidence in using the language. As a result, these students may find it challenging to comprehend spoken English, follow conversations, or express themselves fluently and accurately. This deficiency not only hinders their academic performance but also affects their prospects in an increasingly globalized world where English proficiency is highly valued. Therefore, it becomes imperative for educational institutions to address these shortcomings through tailored programs and strategies aimed at enhancing students' English listening and speaking skills (Chen, J.L., 2016).

The College English Listening and Speaking Course faces several challenges including vague objectives that don't align with real-world language use, insufficient consideration of students' proficiency levels leading to either repetitive or overly difficult content, reliance on traditional lecture-based methods limiting student participation, lack of access to diverse teaching resources hindering exposure to authentic language contexts, and an overemphasis on exams rather than ongoing assessment of listening and speaking skills. Addressing these challenges requires a student-centered approach, clear objectives matching real-world communication needs, interactive teaching methods, diverse teaching resources, and continuous comprehensive evaluation of students' proficiency. (Li, 2016).

The integration of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) theory in College English Listening and Speaking Courses centers on aligning course design and instruction with specific learning outcomes, emphasizing the development of clear, measurable objectives to enhance students' listening and speaking abilities and effective communication skills. This approach shifts from traditional content-driven teaching to an outcome-





driven model that prioritizes practical communication outcomes and authentic language use. Assessments focus on holistic language use and real-world application, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Additionally, Blended Learning, which combines traditional and multimedia teaching methods, offers theoretical guidance for the course's development, providing a student-centered, autonomous learning environment with rich resources and personalized pacing, facilitated by teacher guidance both in and out of the classroom (Chen, 2015; Jiang, 2003; Nan, 2010).

Question

1. What is the background information focusing on course components and existing problems relevant to developing a College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the OBE approach combined with blended learning of non-English major students?
2. What are the components and quality of the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the OBE approach combined with blended learning to enhance students listening and speaking skills?
3. What are the results of implementing the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the OBE approach combined with blended learning to enhance students' listening and speaking skills?
4. How is students' satisfaction with the developed College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the OBE approach combined with blended learning?

Objective

1. To study the background information focusing on course components and existing problems of the College English Listening and Speaking Course.
2. To develop the components and quality of the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on an outcome-based education approach combined with blended learning.
3. To study the results of implementing College English Listening and Speaking Course based on outcome-based education combined with blended learning to enhance English listening and speaking skills of non-English major students.
 - 3.1) To compare students' listening skills test scores before and after implementing the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the OBE approach combined with blended learning.
 - 3.2) To compare students' speaking skills test scores before and after implementing the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the OBE approach combined with blended learning.
 - 3.3) To compare students' satisfaction after implementing the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the OBE approach combined with blended learning with a criterion set at 70%.

Literature Review

College English Listening and Speaking Course

The College English Listening and Speaking Course is a critical component of language education, aiming to develop students' proficiency in comprehending and communicating in English. This background examines the existing studies and research related to the College English Listening and Speaking Course, focusing on key themes such as principles, objectives, course content, instructional strategies, media and resources, and assessment methods.

Researchers have explored various aspects of curriculum design for college English listening and speaking. Studies (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Nunan, 2019) emphasize the importance of aligning the curriculum with the goals and needs of learners. They advocate for a learner-centered approach that integrates



authentic materials, real-life tasks, and interactive activities to promote engagement and meaningful language use. Furthermore, researchers (Brown, 2017; Johnson et al, 2014) highlight the significance of a well-structured and sequenced curriculum that progressively develops students' listening and speaking skills.

Effective instructional strategies play a crucial role in enhancing college English listening and speaking skills. Researchers have explored a range of strategies, including communicative approaches, task-based learning, and cooperative learning. Communicative approaches (Goh & Burns, 2012; Celce Murcia, et al, 2014) emphasize interactive and meaningful communication in the classroom, promoting fluency and accuracy. Task-based learning (Skehan, 2019) focuses on engaging students in real-life tasks that require listening and speaking skills, enhancing their communicative competence. Cooperative learning (Johnson et al, 2014; Slavin, 2013) encourages collaborative activities and peer interactions, fostering language development through interaction and negotiation.

Assessing college English listening and speaking skills presents unique challenges. Researchers have explored various assessment methods to measure students' proficiency accurately. Traditional assessments, such as exams and quizzes, are supplemented by performance-based assessments (Luoma, 2017; Bachman & Palmer, 2018). These include oral presentations, group discussions, and role plays that simulate real-life communication situations. Authentic assessment tasks (Buck, 2016; Wigglesworth, 2018) provide a holistic view of students' language abilities and encourage the integration of listening and speaking skills in a meaningful context.

The integration of technology in college English listening and speaking curricula has received significant attention from researchers due to its various benefits, including providing authentic materials, facilitating self-paced learning, and offering opportunities for practice and feedback through computer-assisted language learning programs and online resources (Chapelle, 2016). Moreover, virtual reality and augmented reality technologies (Hockly & Clandfield, 2013; Chen, 2016) offer immersive experiences, enhancing learners' engagement and motivation by simulating real-world communication situations.

Outcome-Based Education Approach

Spady (1998) first proposed and elaborated on the concept of Outcome-Based Education. He defined it as "clearly focusing and organizing the education system so that it can ensure that students can gain successful experiences in future life". Spady (2013) emphasizes the goal-oriented and results-driven nature of education. He defines OBE as an educational methodology centered around identifying specific knowledge, skills, and abilities that students should attain, and assessing whether students have achieved these objectives. This approach integrates educational design and implementation with expected learning outcomes to ensure students reach predetermined goals during their learning journey.

Wiggins and McTighe (2012) emphasize the focus on students' learning outcomes and ultimate goals. In OBE, education is not only about imparting knowledge but also about ensuring that students acquire specific abilities, skills, and levels of understanding. The core idea of OBE is to establish clear learning objectives and expected outcomes, which should be measurable and reflective of students' learning achievements in specific domains or subjects.

Richard M. Felder (2016) explained that Outcome-Based Education (OBE) is an educational methodology that places a strong emphasis on students' learning outcomes and ultimate goals. Felder emphasizes that OBE focuses on clearly defined learning objectives, which encompass the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students should acquire in a given subject area or topic. In OBE, education aims to





assess whether students have achieved these intended learning objectives, and evaluation methods should closely align with these objectives, providing clear feedback on students' mastery levels.

Felder (2016) highlights the goal-directed nature of OBE, stressing the importance of assessing whether students have reached the desired learning outcomes. Assessment in OBE should be closely related to learning objectives and offer meaningful feedback on students' levels of proficiency. The results of the assessment can guide teachers in adjusting their teaching strategies and providing personalized learning support for students.

Blended Learning

Driscoll (2002) expounded the term, and though it is 1) to combine modes of web-based technology to accomplish an educational goal; 2) to combine various pedagogical approaches to produce an optimal learning outcome; 3) to combine any form of instructional technology with face-to-face instructor-led training; 4) to combine instructional technology with actual job tasks to create a harmonious effect of learning and working. This explanation is quite comprehensive, concerning various aspects like teaching modes, teaching approaches, and teaching technology. Here are more definitions with a focus on one certain perspective.

Valiathan (2002) pointed out that blended learning is used to describe learning that mixes various event-based activities, including face-to-face classrooms, live E-learning, and self-paced learning; Mayadas and Picciano (2007) asserted it is the integration of online learning and face-to-face instruction in any form. The above two definitions stress the component of blended learning, comprising online learning and offline learning.

Garrison and Kanuka (2004) stated it is the integration of asynchronous Internet communication technologies into curriculum, and the promotion of independent and collaborative learning experiences; Mortera (2006) defined it as the combination of various approaches to learning, which combines several different delivery methods, such as collaborative software, web-based courses or computer communication and face to face instruction. In those two definitions, the role of technology has been stressed, including the information technology and the interaction with technology. In addition, the new technology may bring new connotations to the term. For example, Feng (2018) has pointed out that since 2013, internet technology has been booming, and the concept of mobile learning has been inserted into BL.

Christensen (2008) emphasizes the integration of traditional face-to-face teaching with online learning elements to create a more flexible and personalized learning experience. Horn (2015) defines Blended Learning as an instructional approach that combines traditional classroom instruction with online learning activities. Blended Learning integrates both methods to provide a unified instructional model, enabling teachers to deliver knowledge through diverse methods and offering students personalized learning experiences.

Khan (2012) defines blended learning as an instructional method that seamlessly combines traditional face-to-face teaching with online learning components, aiming to deliver a more tailored and efficient educational experience. Within this framework, students engage in interactive classroom activities like discussions and problem-solving, fostering a deeper comprehension of concepts, while they access foundational knowledge and resources outside the classroom through online platforms such as videos.

Instructional strategy based on the OBE approach combined with blended learning

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Citation



Liu, X., Kotchasit, S., & Nilnopkoon, P. (2024). Development of College English Listening and Speaking Course Based on an Outcome-Based Education Approach Combined with Blended Learning to Enhance English Listening and Speaking Skills of Non-English Major Freshmen Students at Xi'an University. *International Journal of Sociologies and Anthropologies Science Reviews*, 4 (6), 439-454; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.60027/ijssar.2024.4851>



In the newly created College English Listening and Speaking Course, the comprehensive learning implementation steps combining an outcome-based education approach and blended learning mainly include the following six steps:

Step1. Determine expected learning outcomes) Accurate pronunciation and phonetics 2) Listening comprehension skills 3) Fluency in oral expression 4) Vocabulary proficiency and grammar usage 5) Cross-cultural communication competence

Step2. Design Teaching Activities: Teacher- led instruction; teacher questioning; students answering; role play; group discussion

Step3. Design Teaching methods: Design teaching methods for both online and offline settings, ensuring they are adaptable, engaging, and conducive to active learning (preparation, online learning, offline learning, online homework, and assessment).

Step4. Design teaching assessments: Formative assessment (50%) and summative assessment (50%).

Step5. Continuous feedback and adaptation: Provide ongoing feedback to students, emphasizing strengths and areas for improvement in both listening and speaking skills. Regularly assess student performance data and adapt the course based on feedback and assessment results.

Step6. Reflection and improvement: Encourage students to reflect on their progress toward the learning outcomes. Additionally, as a teacher, engage in a continuous reflection on the effectiveness of the course. Use this reflection to make adjustments and revisions to optimize the alignment between objectives, curriculum, and assessments.

College English listening skills

College English listening and speaking skills refer to the abilities of students in higher education to comprehend and communicate effectively in the English language through oral means. These skills are crucial for academic success, as well as for professional and social interactions in an increasingly globalized world. The development of listening and speaking skills in College English involves understanding spoken English, expressing ideas clearly, engaging in discussions, and delivering presentations.

Table 1 The most important listening skills and examples (Nunan, 1999)

Listening skills	Example
Listening for specific information	How much does the coat cost?
Listening for signal words	Is the radio report about news or weather?
Listening to the main idea	Why is the speaker asking the man a question?
Listening for purpose	Is the speaker agreeing or disagreeing with the suggestion?
Listening for inference	What does the speaker imply?
Listening for tone/ pitch to identify speakers' attitude	Is the speaker surprised or not?
Listening for stress	What is more important, where did he buy the watch or when?

College English speaking skills

College English speaking skills refer to the ability of college-level students to express themselves fluently, coherently, and accurately in spoken English. These skills are essential for effective communication in various academic and real-life contexts, including class discussions, presentations, group collaborations, and social interactions. Proficient speaking skills involve the use of appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, enabling students to convey their ideas, opinions, and arguments with clarity and confidence.

According to Nunan (2003), college English speaking skills are "the ability to use spoken language appropriately and effectively in social and academic settings." This definition emphasizes the importance of both social and academic contexts, highlighting the need for students to adapt their language use based on the communicative situation.

Furthermore, Richards and Bohlke (2015) state that speaking skills involve "organizing thoughts, using appropriate vocabulary and grammar, and speaking clearly and coherently." This definition emphasizes the cognitive processes involved in speaking, including the organization of ideas and linguistic accuracy.

The components of college English-speaking skills typically include:

1. Language proficiency: Covers pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.
2. Fluency and coherence: Ensures smooth and continuous speech with logical organization of ideas.
3. Listening and responsiveness: Includes active listening and timely, appropriate responses.
4. Pragmatic competence: Understanding and using language in diverse social and cultural contexts.
5. Interpersonal communication: Involves effective interaction skills like turn-taking, active listening, and empathy.

Conceptual Framework

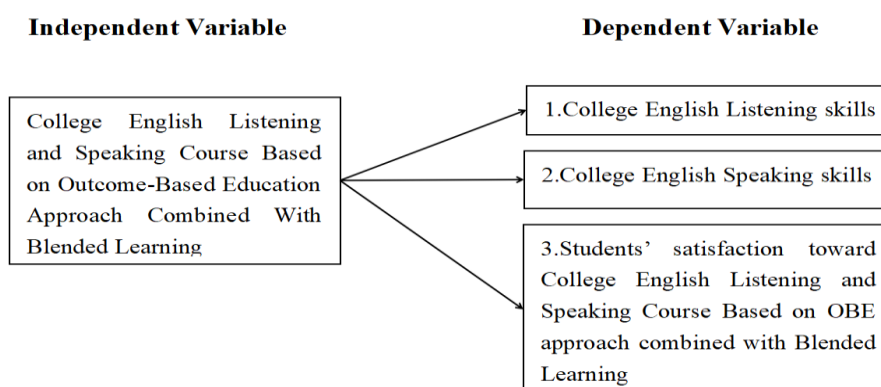


Figure 1 Research Conceptual Framework

Methodology

1. Population and sample: The population in this study was 1200 non-English major first-year students at Xi'an University, China. The sample of this study was 40 first-year students (1 class) of non-English first-year students studying in the first semester of the 2023 academic year at Xi'an University. They were selected by using the cluster random sampling method.

2. Research Instruments: The research instruments which were used in this study were:

- 2.1 College English Listening and Speaking Course based on Outcome-based Education



approach combined with blended learning method: The course based on an outcome-based education approach combined with blended learning includes six components: 1) principles, 2) objectives, 3) content, 4) instructional strategy, 5) media and resources, and 6) assessment and evaluation. Five experts evaluated the draft course, in the 15 items of the College English Listening and Speaking Course evaluation form, it was obtained that the lowest Mean score was 4.45 SD was 0.57, and the highest Mean score was 4.60 and SD was 0.55. The mean total was 4.45 and the SD total was 0.57, which was statistically significant. It was revealed that the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on an outcome-based education approach combined with blended learning was at a high level and could be used.

2.2 Lesson Plans for College English Listening and Speaking Course Based on Outcome-based Education approach combined with blended learning: five experts evaluated the six lesson plans. According to the expert evaluation form, the lowest Mean score was 4.37(SD=0.63), and the highest Mean score was 4.52(SD=0.59). The analysis results showed that lesson plans of the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on an outcome-based education approach combined with a blended learning process met the requirements of enhancing English listening and speaking skills for non-English major students and could be used in the teaching of College English Listening and Speaking Course.

2.3 English listening skills test paper: The test consisted of 3 parts. For part I, students are supposed to listen to three news reports. For part II, students are supposed to listen to two long conversations. For part III, students are supposed to listen to three passages. The item discrimination (r) of this draft test ranged from .84-.96, item difficulty ranged from .65-.71 and reliability was at 0.931. It means the test was qualified and can be used to collect data. (Cronbach, 1951)

2.4 English speaking skills test paper: The test consisted of 4 parts. For part I, students are supposed to do the self-introduction. For part II, students are supposed to read aloud a short passage. For part III, students are supposed to answer two questions. For part IV, students are supposed to talk about the following topic. The item discrimination (r) of this draft test ranged from .61-.80, item difficulty ranged from .62-.77 and reliability was at 0.742. It means the test was qualified and can be used to collect data. (Cronbach, 1951)

2.5 Students' satisfaction questionnaire: The questionnaire is provided to 5 experts for content validity check and suggestions. The quality of the questionnaire is considered according to the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) obtained from the achievement test evaluation form. The item index of congruence of each item (0.6-1.0) is greater than 0.50. The result of analyzing the IOC index showed that all items were appropriate and could be used in the questionnaire. The students' satisfaction questionnaire consisted of 18 questions which had an item discrimination range from 0.22-0.45, The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the reliability of the students' satisfaction questionnaire is 0.786, which is higher than 0.70, which means students' satisfaction questionnaire was qualified and can be used to collect data. (Cronbach, 1951)

3. Data collection: Firstly, the sample was given a pretest for students' English listening skills and a pretest for students' speaking skills. Secondly, the sample was taught using the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on an outcome-based education approach combined with blended learning. Thirdly, the sample was given a post-test for students' English listening skills and a post-test



for English speaking skills after course implementation. Finally, the sample was given a student satisfaction questionnaire toward the developed course.

4. Data analysis: According to the research objectives, statistical methods were used to analyze the data. 1) a listening test for students' English listening skills using a t-test for dependent samples. And 2) a speaking test for students' English speaking skills using t-tests for dependent samples. 3) a student satisfaction questionnaire toward the developed course using a t-test for one sample.

Results

1. The finding of comparing English listening skills of the students before and after receiving the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the OBE approach combined with blended learning by using t-test for dependent samples

Table 2 Result of a dependent sample of college English listening skills test paper scores

Group	Full scores n		Pretest scores		Post-test scores		t	p
			M	SD	M	SD		
Experimental group	25	40	9.38	5.21	12.05	6.23	14.28**	0.001

** The significance level: $p < .01$.

As presented in Table 2, showed the results of college English listening skills test paper scores of 40 students before and after learning through the OBE approach and blended learning course. The Mean score of pretests of students' college English listening skills test papers was 9.38, SD was 5.21, and the Mean score of post-tests was 12.05, SD was 6.23. The finding of this table revealed that after learning through the OBE approach and blended learning course, post-test scores of students' English listening skills test paper were greater than pretest scores at .01 level of statistical significance ($t=14.28$, $p<.01$). The average post-test scores of the study developed increasingly higher than pretest.

2. The finding of comparing English speaking skills of the students before and after receiving the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the OBE approach combined with blended learning by using t-test for dependent samples

Table 3 Result of a dependent sample of college English speaking skills test paper scores

Group	Full scores n		Pretest scores		Post-test scores		t**	p
			M	SD	M	SD		
Experimental group	25	40	12.43	1.80	17.60	2.37	19.33	0.001

** The significance level: $p < .01$.

As presented in Table 3, showed the results of college English speaking skills test paper scores of 40 students before and after learning through the OBE approach and blended learning course. The mean scores of pretests of students' college English speaking skills test papers were 12.43, SD was 1.80, and the mean score of post-tests was 17.60, SD was 2.37. Moreover. The finding of this table

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revealed that after learning through the OBE approach and blended learning course, post-test scores of students' English-speaking skills test were greater than pretest scores at .01 level of statistical significance ($t=19.33$, $p<.01$). The average post-test scores of the study developed increasingly higher than pretest.

3. The finding of comparison of students' satisfaction after learning through the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on OBE combined with blended learning.

Table 4 The finding compares the scores of students' satisfaction after learning through the College English Listening and Speaking Course with the criterion set at 3.51.

Group	n	Full score	Criterion score	M	SD	t**	p
Experimental group	40	5.00	3.51	4.44	0.29	20.12	0.001

** The significance level: $p<.01$.

As presented in Table 4, the mean score of students' satisfaction after learning through College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the OBE approach and blended learning was 4.44 from a possible full mark of 5.0 and the standard deviation was 0.29 which was statistically higher than the determined criterion of 70% at .01 level of statistical significance.

Conclusion

1. The background information data

The results from studying the background data could be divided into two types: 1) the results of studying the relevant literature for this study and 2) the results of teachers and students interviewed about problems.

1.1 The results of studying the relevant literature for this study

Study the background information focusing on course components of college English listening and speaking skills based on an outcome-based education approach combined with blended learning to enhance English listening and speaking skills of non-English major students at Xi'an University.

The researcher thoroughly examined literature related to the College English Listening and Speaking course, China's educational policies, the outcome-based education approach, blended learning, teaching strategies, and evaluation methods. Expert teachers were interviewed to gather insights into the current state of education and data on issues associated with the College English Listening and Speaking Course. By collecting and analyzing textbooks, literature reviews, journals, online resources, and insights from expert interviews and students, a preliminary course framework was formulated. This framework encompasses key elements such as principles, objectives, content, teaching strategies, teaching materials, and assessment methods, integrating data obtained from the course-related information.

1.2 The results of teachers' and students' interviews about problems

The researcher interviewed 5 teachers and 15 second-year students of the College English Listening and Speaking course in Xi'an University and found that there were problems in principle,



objectives, content, instructional strategy, media and resource, and evaluation of the current College English Listening and Speaking course in Xi'an University.

2. The College English Listening and Speaking course is based on the outcome-based education approach and blended learning process to enhance English listening and speaking skills

The experts agree to use the outcome-based education approach and blended learning methods in the new College English Listening and Speaking Course. The outcome-based education approach and blended learning methods align with the practical characteristics of English listening and speaking skills required in the College English Listening and Speaking Course, making them more suitable for the learning of the College English Listening and Speaking Course. The experts support the adoption of this learning approach in the course.

The researchers submitted various documents for the learning process evaluation to each of the five experts, presenting the learning process development strategies, principles, learning process documents instruments of measurement, and lesson plans. Experts agreed to use college English Listening and Speaking courses based on an outcome-based education approach and blended learning. It is believed that the combination of an outcome-based education approach and blended learning is a new concept and new way of teaching reform, which can improve students' English listening and speaking skills and improve the quality of learning. At the same time, the outcome-based education approach and blended learning are integrated into each course-planning activity. Experts, therefore, support the application of College English Listening and Speaking courses based on an outcome-based education approach and blended learning.

3. The finding of implementing the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on an outcome-based education approach and blended learning

The course content includes six units and is scheduled for implementation in the second semester of 2023 (December 4, 2023 to January 12, 2024). The total experiment time was 24 hours. The research objects are 40 students for non-English major students at Xi'an University. Using: 1) pretest and post-test English listening skills test paper 2) pretest and post-test English speaking skills test paper 3) students' satisfaction questionnaire. Data were collected and analyzed quantitatively.

This study analyzed and compared the post-test and pretest of English listening skills and English-speaking skills of non-English major students at Xi'an University after using the outcome-based education approach and blended learning process in class.

3.1 The English listening skills data analysis about the pretest and post-test showed the mean score of post-test data was higher than that of the pretest data. When the confidence level was .01, the correlation between pretest and post-test data was 0.99, and the t-test value Sig. = 0.001 < .01 (The mean of the pretest was 9.38, and the mean of the post-test was 12.05).

3.2 The English-speaking skills data analysis about pretest and post-test showed the mean score of post-test data was higher than that of pretest data. When the confidence level was .01, the correlation between pretest and post-test data was 0.70, and the t-test value Sig. = 0.001 < .01 (The mean of the pretest was 12.43, and the mean of the post-test was 17.60).

3.3 The findings of comparing students' satisfaction after learning through the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the OBE approach and blended learning with the criterion set at 70% were analyzed using a t-test for one sample. The lowest Mean score was 4.30 (SD=0.72), and the highest Mean score was 4.58 (SD=0.64). The mean score of students' satisfaction



after learning through the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on an outcome-based education approach and blended learning was 4.44 and the standard deviation was 0.29 from a possible full mark of 5.0, the satisfaction level was statistically higher than the determined criterion of 70% at .05 level of statistical significance.

Discussion

1. The innovation of the College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the OBE approach combined with blended learning

In College English Listening and Speaking Courses, the integration of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and blended learning methods offers several key benefits. Firstly, OBE helps in clearly defining learning objectives, aiding teachers in designing targeted course content and strategies to achieve these outcomes. Secondly, blended learning combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online resources, providing students with flexible learning options. Online materials strengthen listening and speaking skills outside the classroom, while multimedia resources and interactive activities in class make learning more engaging. Additionally, these methods equip teachers with diverse resources and assessment tools, enabling them to enrich teaching content, assess students' proficiency regularly, and provide targeted guidance. This diversification enhances teaching quality and students' learning effectiveness.

2. The College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the OBE approach combined with blended learning can enhance the English listening skills of non-English major students at Xi'an University.

The College English Listening and Speaking Course, employing Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and blended learning, has significantly improved freshmen non-English major students' listening skills. Utilizing authentic audio materials, students have enhanced their ability to recognize key features like stress, intonation, and speech rate, with online practice further boosting comprehension speed. While post-test scores were slightly below expectations, they still indicated noticeable progress from pretest scores, highlighting the course's effectiveness. However, sustained practice beyond a single semester is necessary for substantial improvement. Continued use of OBE and blended teaching methods is vital, along with integrating various listening skills and strategies into the curriculum for long-term development.

3. The College English Listening and Speaking Course based on the OBE approach combined with blended learning can enhance the English-speaking skills of non-English major students at Xi'an University.

In the college English listening and speaking course, students practice fluent and effective oral communication, mastering pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Through teacher-led role-plays, group discussions, and speaking exercises, they engage in various communicative contexts. Utilizing both online and offline methods, instructors offer ample speaking practice, providing real-time feedback to continually improve students' oral skills. Formative assessments and summative evaluations provide students with comprehensive insights into their proficiency, guiding targeted improvements. Through collaborative learning and online discussions, students gain confidence and fluency, addressing oral challenges across different contexts.





Recommendation

1. Recommendation of implementation

1.1 Develop tailored instructor training programs: considering the current limitations identified in the research, such as instructor unfamiliarity with OBE principles and blended learning, it's essential to design comprehensive training programs. These programs should not only familiarize instructors with OBE principles and blended learning methodologies but also offer practical guidance on implementing these strategies effectively in the classroom. Workshops, seminars, and ongoing professional development opportunities can facilitate this process.

1.2 Curriculum enhancement and alignment: address the lack of clarity and alignment in the College English listening and speaking course by revamping the curriculum. This involves revising course objectives to ensure they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. Additionally, integrate OBE principles and blended learning strategies into the curriculum design to create a more student-centered and engaging learning experience.

1.3 Establish clearer learning outcomes: develop clearer and measurable learning outcomes for each module of the course, aligning them with the broader objectives of English language proficiency and cultural competence. These outcomes should be communicated clearly to students at the beginning of each module, providing them with a guidebook for their learning journey and fostering a sense of accountability.

1.4 Foster a Supportive Learning Environment: recognizing the importance of student engagement and collaboration, create a supportive learning environment where students feel empowered to participate actively and provide feedback. Incorporate collaborative learning activities, peer review sessions, and opportunities for self-assessment to enhance student engagement and comprehension.

1.5 Utilize Technology Appropriately: leverage technology effectively to enhance the learning experience, but ensure that its use aligns with the learning objectives and does not detract from the overall learning experience. Provide training and support for both instructors and students on how to effectively utilize digital tools, online resources, and multimedia materials to supplement classroom instruction.

2. Recommendation for further research

2.1 Longitudinal studies on student progress: conduct longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of implementing OBE principles and blended learning methodologies on the English listening and speaking skills development of non-English first-year students. This would involve tracking students' progress over an extended period to assess the sustainability of their language proficiency gains.

2.2 Exploration of specific blended learning techniques: Further investigate specific blended learning techniques, such as online discussions, virtual simulations, or mobile applications, to identify which approaches are most effective in improving English listening and speaking proficiency among non-English first-year students. Comparative studies can help determine which techniques yield the best results in different contexts.

2.3 Examination of social-cultural factors: explore the role of social-cultural factors in shaping the language learning experience of non-English first-year students. Investigate how cultural backgrounds, language attitudes, and social contexts influence students' language learning outcomes



and identify strategies to promote cross-cultural communication competence within the College English curriculum.

2.4 Overcoming implementation barriers: investigate the barriers and challenges encountered during the implementation of OBE and blended learning in the College English listening and speaking course. Qualitative research methods such as interviews and focus groups can provide insights into the specific challenges faced by instructors and students and inform the development of strategies to address these obstacles effectively.

2.5 Evaluation of assessment methods: evaluate the efficacy of various assessment methods, including formative and summative assessments, in accurately measuring student progress and achievement in English listening and speaking skills within the context of OBE and blended learning. Research could focus on refining assessment rubrics, exploring alternative assessment formats, and investigating the validity and reliability of assessment instruments used in the course.

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