**Review Article**

# Research on Ideological and Political Course Construction of English for General Academic Purpose from Outcome Based Education

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## Abstract

Outcome based education (OBE) has been prevalent in recent years. Under the guidance of OBE and requirement of ideological and political pattern, general academic English has undertaken new course reform in China. This paper focuses on introducing its construction practice in North China Electric Power University from the following aspects: general goal, teaching principle, teaching mode, evaluation methods and teaching effect. The practice research intends to provide new thinking for the construction of general academic English.
**Keywords:** English for General Academic Purpose (EGAP); course construction; Outcome Based Education (OBE).

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the Ministry of Education of China issued the *Guidelines for Ideological and Political Construction of College Courses*, which emphasizes that college English courses should be both instrumental and humanistic. However, the traditional college English curriculum focuses on the instrumental nature of English, and pays less attention to its human nature. Therefore, exploring the ideological and political elements in college English courses and integrating Chinese culture into college English courses will help students enhance their cultural self-confidence, spread Chinese culture, and ultimately achieve the goal of cultivating students. Due to the properties of general academic English, the teaching tends to be instrumental and ignores the humanistic nature. How to integrate the concept of ideological and political education into general academic English? Outcome Based Education (OBE) has provided a possible channel.

OBE was proposed by William G. Spady (1994), an American scholar. Its connotation is to "focus on and organize all things in the education system to ensure students' success after learning experience". This educational concept is application-oriented and emphasizes the actual output of education. The educational concept has gradually been widely spread and applied in many countries and regions.

In China, at present, OBE has been widely promoted in engineering, vocational education and other majors. As for college English teaching field, scholars center on introducing OBE theory and its guiding role. Hu Rong (2021) introduced that universities should establish outcome-oriented teaching objectives and a curriculum system with rich content, implement the teaching mode of smart class, carry out diversified practical activities and establish a multi-dynamic development evaluation system. Yang Yang, Pang Weiwei and Ni Zhigang (2020) discussed the cultivation of students' ideological and political education, put forward suggestions from four dimensions of teaching objectives, teaching content, teaching methods and teaching evaluation, and provided new ideas for ideological and political education in college English curriculum. According to OBE theory, students' learning output, teachers' teaching activities and result evaluation are a complete teaching system.

In general, more and more OBE researches have been carried out in China, but how to associate

**Citation:** Guoping An & Qiu Shuang Zhang (2022). Research on Ideological and Political Course Construction of English for General Academic Purpose from Outcome Based Education. *Sch Int J Linguist Lit, 5*(11): 381-386.

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general academic English course construction with ideological and political elements is an urgent problem to be solved.

## 2. Course construction of EGAP

Under the background of economic globalization and internationalization of higher education，transnational communication ability has been attached great importance. Different from general college English, general academic English aims to improve college students' international communication ability, including:

a. English input ability in the academic context: the ability to listen to English academic lectures and the ability to read English literature and analyze texts;
b. English output ability in academic background: the ability to write English papers and participate in academic conferences and publish academic reports.

### 2.1 General Goal

General academic English is a compulsory English course for non-English major undergraduates in North China Electric Power University (Baoding) in the second semester of the improvement stage, in response to the training requirements of cultivating compound high-quality talents, the ideological and political construction of this course is guided by OBE. This course aims to meet the needs of students' professional development and international talent training. In the aspect of value shaping, teachers will guide students to output through designing teaching activities, and carry out correct socialist values in the new context; in terms of knowledge teaching, teachers need improve their ability to design curriculum, implement integrating

ideological and political elements with content, and enhance the teaching and management ability; in terms of ability training, teachers focus on academic language ability, academic humanistic quality, and the cultivation of speculative ability.

Specifically, course construction includes two aspects:
a. Teaching resource construction (teachers)

Teachers give tasks according to the unit theme during the implementation process, thus forming diverse resources, including micro lessons, videos, audio, literature, etc.

b. Project achievement construction (students)

OBE concept requires students to demonstrate their ability by completing challenging tasks. Students are required to put forward project suggestions, complete project planning, carry out case studies and make oral reports according to the pre-class tasks given by teachers. Such tasks can enable students to think, question, research, and then make decisions. In this process, students' thinking ability, innovation ability and cooperative learning ability are cultivated.

### 2.2 Concrete Measures
#### 2.2.1 Teaching principle: integrating teaching objectives — teaching content —teaching design

According to teaching objectives and content, teachers can play their command function. As Professor Cheng Jiaolin (2020) pointed out, "Teachers can help students shape their values in the process of analyzing and solving problems through teaching design, and guide students to practice correct values in the new context through teaching activities". The specific design is shown in Chart 1 below:
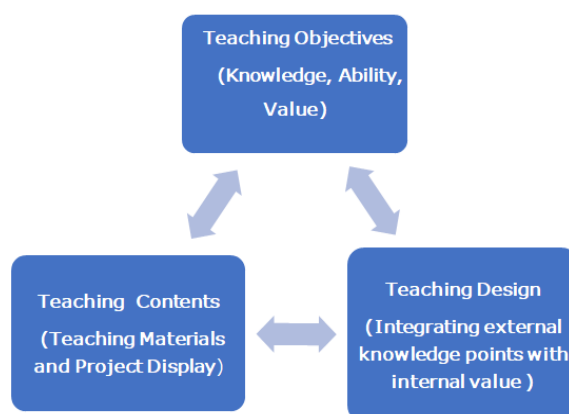


**Chart 1: Integrated Design Principle**

#### 2.2.2 Teaching mode: the curriculum jointly built by teachers and students

Under the guidance of OBE, students are not only participants, but also course co-creators, which requires teachers to focus on students' learning objectives and learning outcomes. The research team

tries to reconstruct the academic English teaching mode by virtue of the ideological and political platform of academic English courses, endow students with greater curriculum autonomy, stimulate students' learning autonomy, and achieve a new teaching mode based on OBE.

| Role | Autonomy Collaboration | Exploration Creation | Sharing |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Planning Stage | Implementation Stage | Sublimation Stage |
| Students | Find interest point | Form the outcome | Team Project Display |
| | Discuss the project theme | Share the outcome | Quiz |
| | Decide the form of outcome | Finish preview task | Discussion |
| | Form team | Utilize resource | Summary |
| Teachers | Provide guidance | Supervise learning | Evaluate learning |

**Chart 2: New T-S Co-construction Teaching Mode**

### 2.2.3 The integration of ideological and political elements in teaching discourse

Before class, teachers dig into the textbook and find the ideological and political elements (Chart 3). During class, teachers integrate ideological and political elements into teaching and project activities. Students can improve their English skills and humanistic quality by participating in project achievements display, project evaluation and summary, so that the teaching practice can achieve the teaching effect of educating students.

| Ideological and Political Elements in General Academic English Course | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Unit Theme | National Level | Social Level | Individual Level |
| U1 Health and Cigarette Smoking | Personal health is the cornerstone of national development. | Build a healthy and harmonious society. | Develop a healthy lifestyle. |
| U2 Understanding of Global Warming | China's efforts to achieve the goal of global carbon neutrality. | Understand the concept of shared future for mankind. | Save energy and reduce emissions in campus. |
| U3 Breast Feeding Practice | Care about next generation. | Construct the responsibility of parents. | Care about mothers. |
| U4 Genetically Modified Foods | Food safety is related to national stability and development. | The application of science and technology should comply with national laws, regulations and social ethics. | Develop a healthy eating habit. |
| U5 Scientific Fraud | Standardize intellectual property rights. | Establish a fair and just ecological environment. | Establish the concept of academic integrity. |

**Chart 3: Integration of Ideological and Political Elements in Teaching Discourse**

### 2.3 Evaluation methods

The evaluation of this course is based on the combination of formative evaluation and summative evaluation. The composition of formative evaluation is 40% (student's assignment+ project display +writing paper) while the summative evaluation (examination) accounts for 60%.

During the formative evaluation, rubric is adopted as the evaluation criteria, which is a set of criteria for evaluating or grading students' works, achievements, growth or performance.

| Rubric for Evaluating the Learning Process | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Project Content | Rank A | Rank B | Rank C | Self -evaluation | Mutual -evaluation | Teacher' comment |
| Participation | Actively raise their hands to speak and participate in group discussions and exchanges. | Raise their hands to communicate and passively participate in group tasks. | Rarely raise their hands to speak, and rarely participate in activities. | | | |
| Cooperation | Work together to play a leading role in the group; contribute greatly to coordination. | Promote the work of the whole group, and encourage other members until the task is completed. | Participate in discussion and exchange, evaluate the results, but just watch the evaluation process. | | | |
| Innovation | There is a clear sense of innovation in learning, and the views are reasonable. | There is a certain degree of innovation in learning. | Little innovation in learning. | | | |
| Learning Attitude | Study hard, take initiative, and strive to complete tasks. | Listen carefully, participate in communication, and complete group tasks. | Listen carefully, and complete tasks with the help of peers. | | | |
| Self-inquiry | Strong thirst for knowledge, constantly ask questions related to the task and seek answers. | Able to ask questions related to the theme, hoping to find answers and seeking solutions. | Ask questions and seek answers, but sometimes deviated from the theme or did not think further, lacking perseverance and relying on peers | | | |

**Chart 3: The Frame of Rubric**

## 2.4 Implementation plan for ideological and political education

The three-step push scheme is implemented. In combination with the teaching unit, teachers give different tasks before, during and after class. The push mode is shown in Chart 4 below:

| Period | Before Class | | In Class | After Class |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| teacher | | Provide materials | Discussion and participatory learning | Give assignment |
| | | Assign tasks | | |
| Role | student | Finish preview task | Project Display | Knowledge consolidation and transfer |
| Way | online | | offline | online |

**Chart 4: Three-step Push Scheme**

Take Unit 2 *Understanding of Global Warming* for example. According to the specific situation of freshmen, teachers should strengthen the training of language skills and cultivate students' emotions, attitudes and values instead of language itself. Teaching objectives should be set up as the following:

a. Academic Knowledge Objectives

Understand and recognize the signpost language indicating specific premises and conclusions.

b. Academic Skill Objectives
- How to write a paragraph to support a specific discourse and three commonly used methods
- Searching for reliable sources
- Using outside sources by direct quotation and summarizing

c. Value Objectives
- To help students understand the necessity of curbing carbon emission and the concept
- To enhance students' understanding of shared future for mankind

**Before class, preparing task list:**
The teacher provides the following materials:
1. Question-guided text reading list
- How to read literature quickly and efficiently?
- How to distinguish the reliability of data sources?
- How to use others' research as supporting materials for my research?

2. Watch the video
- TED: "100 solutions to reverse global warming"
- China's path to carbon neutrality by 2060

3. Read literature:
  Carbon Neutrality
(https://www.carbonfootprint.com/carbonneutrality.html)

Student should prepare:
1. Preview the article of this unit
  - Read the summary of this unit and summarize the main contents
  - Find the corresponding greenhouse effect, global warming, carbon emissions and other data from the information sources listed in the article, and identify the reliability of the data
  - Distinguish between quotation, abstract and paraphrase

2. The team submits the status quo of carbon emissions in the world and the measures taken by countries to achieve "carbon neutrality", lists the sources of information and preliminarily judges whether the information is reliable, and submits the first draft in the teaching platform Ketangpai.

**In class: teaching design and process**
  1. Introduction: students quickly browse a series of pictures related to environmental pollution, and use the vocabulary provided by the teacher to describe these pictures: deforestation, loss of biodiversity, air pollution, soil erosion, water scarcity, ocean acidification, etc.
  2. Academic Reading: Read material "Using Interactive Technology to Support Students' Understanding of the Greenhouse Effect and Global Warming?"

  In the part of reading and discussion, teachers should give full guidance to remind students to stick to the topic and reading materials, and discuss with their own life experience.

  3. Group Oral presentation: (Students will adopt Rubric to measure their performance)

Main report points:
  - Investigation on the current situation of carbon emissions in the world and measures taken to achieve carbon neutrality.
  - Understand the carbon emissions of countries around the world and China's efforts;

4. Academic Writing
  Teachers explain three ways to support arguments in argumentation: evidence support, argument support and emotional support, and organize students to revise the writing. Teachers need fully explain and illustrate the three methods of supporting arguments, and lead students to take appropriate writing exercises in groups, then ask the group to show the writing and make comments on some common problems.

**After class: Assignment**
  1. Students work in groups of 3 or 4, carry out a research and write a report with the title "Giving Green a Chance".
  2. In terms of reducing carbon emission, make a list of actions we can do individually and share with the class.

  Teachers combine language knowledge, reading, writing skills and the goal of building a community with a shared future. The teaching content starts with the reading that students are familiar with, and guides students to change from input practice to output practice, finally introduces writing skills training. On the basis of writing skills training, teachers assign homework to guide students to think independently and complete cooperative tasks: "What can ordinary people do in their daily life to protect the common earth environment of mankind?", which embodies the values of building a community with a shared future for mankind.

**3. Teaching Effect of EGAP**
  According to the statistics of school authority, the average teaching score of the research team is above 90, which proves that the majority of students are satisfied with OBE. In addition, in July of 2022, the research team conducted an online questionnaire survey (436 valid questionnaires) and in-depth interviews (15 students and 6 teachers) on the effectiveness of ideological and political teaching in academic English. The results show that more than 80% of the students believe that teachers can integrate ideological and political elements into the course according to the unit theme, and they also recognize that the videos and literature materials given by teachers are closely related to the teaching content, and can naturally integrate ideological and political elements into academic English teaching, and the values conveyed by teachers are closely related to the teaching theme. Students can improve their understanding of the subject unit, which will stimulate students' interest in learning.

  Through academic English learning, students' abilities, such as consulting literature, logical thinking and academic writing, have been significantly enhanced. Meanwhile, students' project investigation ability, cooperation ability and completion ability have been improved by learning tasks, so that their academic literacy ability and thinking ability have been greatly enhanced.

**4. Future Work and Conclusion**
  The integration of teaching objectives, teaching content and teaching design requires teachers to play the role of conductor, and construct the corresponding curriculum system structure according to students' ability structure. With the improvement of students' knowledge and ability, the intermediary role of teachers gradually weakens, and through reducing

intervention, students' autonomous learning and autonomous inquiry ability can be further improved.

Still, teachers need to clarify students' learning achievements:
1. What are the learning outcomes of students?
2. Why should students achieve such learning results?
3. How to help students achieve these learning outcomes?
4. How to know that students have achieved these learning achievements?

Another problem is that how to test whether the ideological and political integration of college English courses has achieved significant results in moral cultivation, and whether students' learning self-confidence has been enhanced. In view of the fact that the ideological and political education is invisible, which is not suitable for simple evaluation, the research team will plan to adopt the forms of diversified scoring subjects, diversified evaluation forms, comprehensive evaluation contents, and specific evaluation standards to evaluate the effectiveness of the ideological and political education.

In summary, OBE concept has been proven effective in course construction of general academic English. However, it still needs to be researched and put it into more practice.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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