

Exploration of Curriculum Reform for the " Bar Service Application " Course in Higher Vocational Education under the OBE Philosophy: Integration of Positions, Courses, Competitions, Certifications, and Innovation

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ABSTRACT

To address issues such as disconnect between job skills and training, inefficient competition resources, lagging certification standards, and superficial innovation education in the current Higher Vocational "Bar Service Application" course, this study constructs a five-dimensional collaborative education model based on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) principles. By analyzing the intrinsic connections among job requirements, curriculum content, skill competitions, vocational certifications, and innovation-entrepreneurship capabilities, the paper proposes strategies for optimizing curriculum content, innovating teaching methods, and establishing diversified evaluation mechanisms. The findings aim to provide references for curriculum reforms in hotel management programs at higher vocational institutions.

KEYWORDS

OBE; Post-course-competition-certification-innovation integration; Higher vocational education; Bar service application

1 Introduction

1.1 Research background

With global economic development and industrial upgrading, the demand for high-quality technical talents has intensified. Vocational education, as a critical pathway for talent cultivation, shoulders significant responsibility for socioeconomic progress. In recent years, the state has attached great importance to the development of vocational education, and introduced a series of policies and measures to promote the deepening of reform and innovative development of vocational education. In April 2021, State Council emphasized in the National Conference on Vocational Education that it is necessary to adhere to the principle of "making people moral", optimize the positioning of types, accelerate the construction of a modern vocational education system, deepen the "three education" reform, and promote the "three education" reform ^[1]. These important expositions point out the direction for the development of vocational education, and also provide a theoretical basis and action guide for the teaching reform of higher vocational colleges and universities.

In this context, the concept of OBE (Outcome-based Education) has gradually become an important guiding ideology for the reform of vocational education, which emphasizes student-centeredness and learning outcome orientation, and promotes the comprehensive development of students' knowledge, skills and abilities through clear learning objectives, optimized instructional design, and diversified evaluation methods. This concept is highly compatible with the goals of vocational education and provides new ideas and methods for the curriculum and teaching reform of higher vocational colleges.

As one of the important majors in higher vocational colleges and universities, the talent cultivation goal of hotel management is to cultivate hotel management talents with a high degree of professionalism and practical ability. However, there are many problems in the traditional teaching mode of hotel management professional courses, such as the disconnection between course content and job requirements, single teaching method, and insufficient practical ability of students. These problems seriously affect the quality of talent cultivation and restrict the development of vocational education. Therefore, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to explore the integrated teaching mode of "post-course, competition, certificate and innovation" based on the concept of OBE to improve the quality of talent cultivation for hotel management majors and to promote the high-quality development of vocational education.

1.2 Research significance

1.2.1 Theoretical contributions

On the basis of OBE concept, this study explores the application of "Post-Course-Competition-Certification-Innovation" integrated mode in the higher vocational "Bar Service Application" course, which enriches the theoretical system of teaching reform of vocational education courses. By analyzing the intrinsic connection between job demand, course content, skill competition, vocational certificate and innovation and entrepreneurship cultivation, it provides a new

theoretical perspective and methodological guidance for the teaching reform of higher vocational hotel management professional courses, and helps to promote the innovation and development of vocational education curriculum teaching theory.

1.2.2 Practical implications

Taking the course "Bar Service Application" as an example, this study provides a concrete practical path and operation method for the teaching reform of higher vocational hotel management professional courses by constructing the teaching mode of "post-course, competition, certificate and innovation", optimizing the course content, innovating the teaching method, perfecting the evaluation method, and strengthening the cooperation between schools and enterprises. Through the implementation of this teaching mode, it can effectively enhance students' professional skills and vocational ability, improve students' professionalism and employment competitiveness, and cultivate more high-quality technical and skilled talents for the hotel industry. At the same time, the results of this study also provide a useful reference and reference for the teaching reform of other higher vocational professional courses, which has a wide range of practical application value.

2 Reform requirements under the "post-course-competition-certification-innovation" paradigm

The teaching method of "post-course-competition-certification-innovation" is based on the demand of job ability, focusing on the combination of course teaching content and job requirements, giving full play to the role of industry skills competitions and vocational skills certificates in educating and training people, and breaking the dilemma of derailment of the traditional education and production demand. "Post", i.e., to determine the course learning standard with the specific job requirements of enterprises; "course", i.e., to build the curriculum system by docking the requirements of occupational standards and core competencies of jobs; "competition", i.e., to build the curriculum system by students' participation in industry skill competitions and vocational skill certificates. "Competition", that is, students participate in relevant competitions, in the competition to strengthen the learning of professional skills, training, so as to achieve the effect of improving the quality of teaching and learning; "Certification" refers to combining the curriculum with the examination of relevant certificates, and testing the learning of the curriculum through certificates in order to equip students with corresponding vocational abilities; "Innovation" refers to enhancing the innovation and entrepreneurship level of students^[2].

2.1 Post-course integration (job standards as foundation)

The concept of OBE emphasizes the goal of pushing back from the cultivation goal to the goal realized by the course, and focuses on the close integration of the teaching content of the course with the demand of the job positions. In the course of "Bar Service Application", the work tasks in the actual positions are integrated, and the industry experts are invited to work with the full-time teachers to sort out and refine the work duties and contents of the bar-related positions, docking the job standards, and decomposing the requirements of vocational ability. The teaching content of the course is launched in accordance with the job standards, so as to promote the curriculum and teaching objectives of the course to be in line with the vocational ability of the job, and to pay attention to absorbing the new knowledge, new methods and new technologies developed by the industry, so as to realize the continuous updating and optimization of the course.

Through the mutual integration of courses and jobs, the course content is closely integrated with the job requirements, and the students are able to clearly define their career goals, improve their professionalism and practical ability in the learning process, and lay a solid foundation for smooth employment after graduation.

2.2 Competition-course integration (competition-driven learning)

The World Skills Competition is the highest level of world vocational skills events, known as the "World Skills Olympics", is an important platform for members of the World Skills Organization to display and exchange vocational skills^[3]. The World Skills Competition restaurant service project includes spirits blind tasting, snack service, fruit platter production, coffee production and service, cocktail production and service competition events. The National Skills Competition for Vocational Colleges and Universities was also launched in 2008, providing an important platform for the display of the achievements of reform and development of vocational education. The Bar Service Application course insists on the competition requirements of the World Skills Competition and Vocational College Skills Competition, and integrates the relevant requirements and contents of the competitions into the teaching process, so as to promote learning by competitions. In addition, in order to increase students' interest and enthusiasm in learning and enhance their

Table 1 Positioning of jobs and vocational abilities of the course "Bar Service Application"

Docking jobs	Occupational position ability cultivated by the curriculum docking
Bar waiter	Familiar with various types of drinks, various types of glasses and prices of drinks
	Familiar with drink service procedures and requirements
	Ability to recommend and sell drinks
Bartender	Familiar with the basic knowledge of liquor, master the liquor service program
	Knowledge of drink mixing techniques
	Creative development of drinks according to different themes
Barista	Familiar with the basics of coffee and the workflow of coffee service
	Master coffee making techniques
	Ability to recommend and sell coffee according to customer requirements
	Creative development of coffee
Bar operation and management positions	Master the basic knowledge of various types of alcohol, coffee, beverages, etc., and be able to design and produce wine lists.
	Mastery of wine making and coffee making techniques
	Ability to taste wine and coffee
	Be able to use new technologies and methods for bar marketing.

concentration in the classroom, the teaching team also designs and organizes various kinds of competitions to realize the combination of the course and the competition. For example, the team organizes competitions such as "Wine Label Design Competition", "Coffee Latte Art Competition" and "Hand Brewed Coffee Competition", and introduces the purpose, content and meaning of the competitions to the students, so that the students can learn systematically with the goal of the competitions. Students are introduced to the purpose, content and significance of the competitions, so that they can systematically learn their professional skills with the competitions as their goal, thus helping them to grow in a competitive environment.

Through the mode of mutual integration of classes and competitions, students can further consolidate their professional knowledge, improve their professional skills, and cultivate their teamwork ability and sense of competition in the process of participating in skills competitions. At the same time, the high standards and strict requirements of skills competitions can also prompt teachers to continuously optimize the teaching content and teaching methods to improve teaching quality.

2.3 Certification-course integration (certification validation)

Combine the course with the examination of vocational skills certificates, test the learning effect of the course through the certificate, so that students have the corresponding vocational ability, for example, the teaching team comprehensively analyze the bartender, sommelier, barista and other relevant vocational skills certification exams related to the assessment requirements, the standard skills examination requirements, redesign the course teaching content and evaluation standards, will be related to the skills assessment into the course teaching content, so that students can study the course at the same time to obtain relevant certificates independently to enhance employment competitiveness. The teaching content of the course is redesigned to integrate the relevant skills assessment content into the teaching content of the course, so that students can obtain relevant certificates independently while studying the course and enhance their competitiveness in employment. In the past year, our college has obtained 29 people with special skill certificates for coffee and 150 people with special skill certificates for tea making.

Through the integration of courses and certificates, students are able to clarify their vocational goals, improve their vocational quality and practical ability in the process of learning, and lay a solid foundation for smooth employment after graduation. At the same time, the acquisition of vocational certificates can also provide strong support for students' career development and enhance their confidence in employment and market competitiveness.

2.4 Innovation-course integration (entrepreneurship cultivation)

Under the framework of the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) philosophy, innovative practice serves as a critical component in enhancing students' comprehensive capabilities. The "Bar Service Application" course focuses on cultivating students' innovative thinking and entrepreneurial competencies within the bar service domain. Its curriculum design centers on the development of students' innovation and entrepreneurship abilities, bridging job requirements with long-term career development. Adopting a dual-track approach that integrates theoretical instruction and entrepreneurial simulation, the course emphasizes fostering students' innovative awareness, thinking patterns, and entrepreneurial spirit. It also integrates the ethos of craftsmanship into practical training sessions, guiding students to cultivate qualities such as resilience, attention to detail, courage to innovate, and persistence in practice. Meanwhile, the

course cultivates a vibrant atmosphere of innovation and entrepreneurship, igniting students' enthusiasm for participating in competitions, and encouraging their active engagement in classroom projects, faculty research initiatives, and innovation-incubation programs. Through these efforts, students continuously refine their innovative thinking, teamwork, and creative problem-solving skills, ultimately achieving comprehensive improvement in their independent innovation and entrepreneurship capabilities. For instance, the "Friday Night" activity is designed to engage students in group work: combining market trends and customer demands, they develop tailored beverage products, conduct promotional presentations, and manage sales processes, with their marketing outcomes incorporated into course assessments. With faculty guidance and collaborative student efforts, the course has successfully secured two district-level or higher innovation and entrepreneurship projects, including "Blending Oriental Elegance with Western Romance: The Art of Crafting Chinese Cocktails." This pedagogical approach enables students to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical application, thereby enhancing their innovative and practical capacities.

Through the integration of coursework and innovation-driven practices, students can systematically develop innovative thinking and entrepreneurial abilities during their studies, elevate their overall competencies, and lay a robust foundation for future career advancement and entrepreneurial endeavors.

3 Implementation strategies of "post-course-competition-certification-innovation" based on obe principles

3.1 Curriculum content optimization

In accordance with the teaching requirements of integrating "positions, courses, competitions, certifications, and innovation-entrepreneurship," the teaching content of the "Bar Service Application" course has been optimized. Guided by job requirements, this optimization involves analyzing the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for typical job tasks in the field. It also integrates industry standards and the requirements of vocational skill certificates to comprehensively sort out and restructure the course content. By breaking free from the constraints of traditional disciplinary systems, a modularized curriculum knowledge system has been established, with the course content and teaching objectives redesigned accordingly. For example, in daily teaching, targeted intensive training is provided to enable students to successfully obtain relevant vocational skill certificates while mastering the general curriculum content, thereby strengthening their readiness for future career development. Additionally, the project settings and scoring criteria of various skill competitions are actively referenced and integrated into course instruction. Through the organization of on-campus simulated competition activities, a competitive environment is fostered to enhance students' professional skills and competitive performance^[4].

Table 2 Optimized knowledge system of bar service application course

Curriculum Module	Course Content	Teaching Objectives
Basic Knowledge Module	Fundamental knowledge of beverages (including classification, characteristics, origins, etc.), basic knowledge of coffee (covering types of coffee beans, grinding, storage methods, etc.), and bar service etiquette (encompassing appearance, speech and conduct, communication skills, etc.)	Master basic knowledge of beverages and coffee; familiarize with basic etiquette norms for bar service; lay a solid foundation for subsequent learning and practice.
Core Competency Module	Beverage making (e.g., preparation of classic cocktails and specialty mixed drinks), coffee making (including making common Italian-style espresso-based coffees such as espresso, latte, cappuccino, and mocha), and drinks service procedures (the whole process of service from ordering, preparation to serving and checking out)	Master techniques for beverage mixing, drink preparation, and coffee making; familiarize with standardized bar service procedures; develop the ability to independently complete daily bar service tasks.
Professional Development Module	Bar operations management (including cost control, staff management, marketing, etc.), menu design (designing reasonable beverage menus based on market demands and establishment positioning), and beverage marketing (learning marketing techniques such as promotion event planning and customer relationship maintenance)	Broaden professional perspectives; understand key aspects of bar operations management; master basic methods for menu design and beverage marketing; acquire foundational capabilities for bar operations management.
Innovation and Practice Module	Innovative beverage development (experimenting with new recipes and flavor combinations), creative coffee development (exploring unique coffee presentation styles), and innovative bar service (contemplating approaches to enhance service quality and customer experience)	Stimulate innovative thinking and entrepreneurial awareness; cultivate students' ability to independently develop new products and services; lay a foundation for future innovation and entrepreneurship in related industries.

Through the optimization of the curriculum knowledge system, the course content has become more closely aligned with job requirements, and teaching objectives have been refined to be more specific and actionable. This enhancement not only facilitates students' systematic acquisition of the knowledge and skills essential for bar service but also effectively elevates their professional competency levels and comprehensive vocational capabilities.

3.2 Course methodology design

This course adopts diversified and integrated teaching strategies, with a core focus on enhancing students' practical abilities and professional competence. It constructs a holistic four-dimensional teaching model encompassing immersive scenario-based teaching, practical project-based learning, theory-practice integrated training, and digital-intelligence empowered instruction. The specific implementation pathways are as follows:

3.2.1 Immersive scenario-based teaching method

Realistic bar work scenarios are created to simulate the actual operational environment of a bar. Students assume diverse roles, such as bartenders, baristas, servers, and cashiers, engaging in role-playing and interactive communication within these simulated contexts. Instructors design various unexpected situations and challenges to test students' adaptability and emergency response capabilities. For example, simulating a guest ordering scenario with intentional disruptions allows observation of how students resolve conflicts, guiding them to apply appropriate communication skills and service strategies. This method helps students better adapt to future work environments, enhances their professional competence, and strengthens their service awareness.

3.2.2 Practical project-based teaching method

This course utilizes authentic bar service projects as carriers, decomposing course knowledge points and skill requirements into these projects. Under instructor guidance, students complete project planning, implementation, and evaluation in small groups. For instance, given a bar-themed event project under specific conditions, students are responsible for developing event proposals, setting up venues, designing beverage menus, assigning staff roles, and managing on-site service. Throughout this process, students must integrate their knowledge of beverages, service etiquette, and operational management to address practical challenges. This approach facilitates learning through practice, boosts students' initiative and enthusiasm, and cultivates their project management, team collaboration, and problem-solving skills.

3.2.3 Theory-practice integrated teaching aligned with "knowledge and action unity"

This method combines theoretical instruction with hands-on practice, adopting an "explain-while-practice" approach in class. Instructors first explain relevant theoretical knowledge and operational key points, after which students immediately engage in practical tasks. For example, following a demonstration of cocktail mixing techniques, students proceed to prepare the cocktail under the instructor's on-site guidance and observation, with timely corrections of errors. After completing the practical task, students are guided to reflect on and summarize their experiences, revisiting the theoretical knowledge to deepen their understanding. Additionally, students are encouraged to raise questions, prompting instructors to provide further explanations and expand on related concepts.

3.2.4 Informatization teaching innovation empowered by digital intelligence

Multimedia resources and online course platforms are fully utilized to support instruction. Well-designed courseware, featuring rich images and video materials, helps students visually grasp the types, characteristics, and production processes of beverages and coffee. Online platforms are employed to post learning tasks, assignments, and quizzes, facilitating interactive communication between instructors and students. The application of informatization tools improves teaching efficiency and quality, while enhancing the appeal and engagement of the learning process.

3.3 Establishing diversified assessment methods

Under the OBE philosophy, assessment serves as a critical means to measure student learning outcomes. To align with this principle, diversified assessment methods are established to evaluate students from multiple dimensions, including knowledge, skills, competencies, and innovation.

3.3.1 Constructing diversified assessment methods

(1) Diversification of assessment subjects

The traditional single-teacher assessment model is transformed by introducing multiple assessment subjects, including student self-assessment, peer assessment, and enterprise mentor assessment. Student self-assessment helps learners recognize their academic progress and areas for improvement; peer assessment fosters mutual learning and communication among students; and enterprise mentor assessment provides an objective evaluation of students' professional competencies and comprehensive qualities from an industry perspective^[5].

(2) Comprehensiveness of assessment content

Assessment content extends beyond the mastery of knowledge and skills to encompass students' learning attitudes, teamwork spirit, innovative abilities, and other qualities. For instance, through observing students' classroom participation, enthusiasm and contributions to projects, and innovative ideas, a holistic evaluation of their overall capabilities can be achieved.

(3) Diversification of assessment approaches

A combined approach of formative assessment and summative assessment is adopted. Formative assessment primarily includes classroom participation, assignment completion, and project implementation processes. Summative assessment mainly involves final examinations, skill tests, and project presentations. Additionally, informatization tools are employed to record students' learning trajectories and growth portfolios, providing evidence for comprehensive evaluation.

Table 3 Diversified assessment methods

Evaluation Dimension	Evaluation Content	Evaluation Method
Knowledge	Theoretical Knowledge (e.g., beverage knowledge, coffee knowledge, bar service etiquette, etc.)	Theoretical Examinations, Classroom Quizzes
Mastery		
Skill	Beverage Mixing Skills, Coffee Making Skills, Service Operation Skills	Skill Assessments, Practical Operation Evaluations
Proficiency		
Professional Competencies	Bar Operations Management Capabilities, Beverage Menu Design Capabilities, Beverage Marketing Capabilities	Project Completion Performance, Case Analysis Reports
Innovative Abilities	Creative Beverage Development Capabilities, Creative Coffee Development Capabilities, Service Innovation Awareness	Innovation Project Presentations, Entrepreneurship Plan Writing
Process Performance	Classroom Performance (e.g., attendance, participation, quality of contributions, etc.), Group Discussion Performance, Learning Attitude	Daily Observation Records, Learning Journals
Enterprise Evaluation	Internship Performance (e.g., work attitude, professional skill application capabilities, team collaboration capabilities, etc.)	Enterprise Evaluation Forms, Internship Reports

3.3.2 Strengthening the application of assessment results

(1) Feeding back to improve teaching

Based on the analysis of assessment results, teaching issues and deficiencies are identified, enabling timely adjustments to teaching content and methods. For example, if most students struggle with a specific knowledge point, that topic will be re-explained and reinforced through intensive practice; if a teaching method proves ineffective, alternative approaches will be explored.

(2) Motivating student learning

Assessment results are linked to students' academic performance. Outstanding students are recognized and rewarded to stimulate their learning enthusiasm and initiative. Meanwhile, personalized learning plans are developed for students' weak areas identified through assessments, helping them address gaps and improve academic achievement.

(3) Promoting teachers' professional development

Assessment results also reflect teachers' teaching level and professionalism. By analyzing these results, teachers reflect on their teaching practices and methods, continuously refining strategies to enhance teaching quality. Furthermore, schools incorporate teachers' assessment outcomes into performance evaluation systems to incentivize ongoing improvements in professional capabilities and instructional expertise.

4 Conclusion

The "integration of post, courses, competitions, certifications, and innovation" (hereafter referred to as the "five-in-one") comprehensive talent cultivation model is not merely a mechanical superposition of the five elements—positions, courses, competitions, certifications, and innovation. Instead, grounded in the OBE (Outcome-Based Education) outcome-

based approach, it takes position competency standards as the starting point, curriculum restructuring as the core, competitions and certifications as verification mechanisms, and innovation as an extension, forming a spiral upward closed loop of "needs—objectives—implementation—assessment—improvement." The "Bar Service Application" course exemplifies this philosophy by: transforming typical bar job scenarios into learning tasks; refining competition scoring criteria into classroom evaluation indicators; embedding standards from "1+X" bartender, barista, and mixed drink bartender certifications into teaching modules; and using real-world bar operation projects as carriers. Through completing tasks such as "developing creative beverages—managing bar operations—executing themed marketing campaigns," students not only master hard skills in beverage preparation and service but also cultivate craftsmanship, aesthetic sensibilities, and commercial thinking.

Practical experience has proven that this "five-in-one" integrated teaching reform has significantly enhanced students' professional skills, occupational identity, and employability, while providing a replicable paradigm for curriculum development in higher vocational hospitality management programs. However, curriculum reform is an ongoing journey: job requirements evolve, competition rules change, certification standards update, and forms of innovation transform. This study serves as a preliminary exploration, and we hope that more colleagues, drawing on their respective professional characteristics, will continue to enrich the theoretical connotations and practical paths of the "five-in-one" model. Ultimately, vocational education should center on students' growth and success, align with enterprise recruitment needs, and contribute to societal sustainable development, demonstrating through actions and outcomes its equal importance to general education.

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