

The Current Situation and Countermeasures of Logistics Talent Training in China

Lingyan Luo, Zhen Yan

Beijing Normal University Zhuhai Campus, Zhuhai, China
Beijing Normal University Zhuhai Campus, Zhuhai, China
luolingyan4@126.com, yanzhen1970@126.com

Keywords: logistics; talent training; current situation; countermeasures

Abstract. Nowadays the graduates can't meet the needs of society, which makes us to have a rethink about the logistics talent training in China. There are some problems in present training system of logistics: the talent training plans revises constantly; the professional teachers are not enough; the teaching method should be improved; the conditions to cultivate innovative talents are insufficient. So this paper puts forward some countermeasures to change the status: setting up the talent training plan which can meet the requirements of society; getting diversified teaching resources from various sources; teaching inside and outside the classroom; creating favorable conditions to support the talents cultivation.

Introduction

From Beijing Wuzi University set up the logistics management major in 1994 in China, there are more than 300 universities have the major now. The number of logistics graduates is growing rapidly.

Theoretically, there should be no difficulty for the logistics companies or departments to find the right person who will meet their needs.

But the reality is that few, if any, of the new graduates could really fill the vacancies because the training they have received are entirely different from the demands of the jobs.[1] Usually the companies have to take a second training to let them perform the duties their jobs require.

How to educate the students into professionals who will meet the requirements that the society needs? If we achieve the goal, we can save transition time from school to society and reduce cost both for the graduates and companies. So it becomes a valuable and urgent issue for us to think.

The current situation of logistics talent training

The talent training plan revises constantly. Some foreign countries have started their training of logistics talent for a long time, and have formed a rational system now. But this is different in China. Logistics is a new subject which has a short history in China, and people are trying to set up their training plan cautiously, because there is no precedent to go with in the country.

The opening of logistics management major was in 1994, but the Ministry of Education set up the logistics steering committee for education and instruction in higher education in 2007, which lead to the result that the training plans in some universities are established without guidance at the beginning. When the logistics steering committee appears, the universities have to revises their training plan from time to time according to the guidance. This more or less influences the stability and sustainability of teaching and upsets the plan which has been made before.

The lack of professional teachers. From the previous information about the education history of logistics management in China, we can calculate that the earliest postgraduates of logistics graduated in 2001, according to the opening time of the logistics management major. If we assume that the universities accept the postgraduate student to be a teacher in logistics at the beginning, there are no professional teachers in China before 2001. And the fact is that only parts of the postgraduate students go to the universities, and the others find jobs in companies. So we can see how apparent the shortage of professional teachers of logistics in higher education is.

There is a widespread problem in existing education of logistics -- the real professional teachers are not enough. Some of the teachers did not graduate from the logistics major, so they may have no good understanding of this subject. Many of them try to learn it themselves first, then to teach the students. It influences the quality of the teaching, and students may not clear about the knowledge. [2]

Lack of innovative teaching method. Although now advocating innovative teaching, improve students' practical ability and comprehensive quality, most teachers received the traditional theory teaching when they were students. So there are no experiences and rules for them to follow on how to change the present situation, which is mainly theory teaching, not practices.

On the other hand, if they try to adopt a new teaching method, it may conflict with the teaching requirements and regulations in the universities. The design of the new teaching method needs a lot of time and energy, and when it been put into practices, no one can promise it will achieve the desired goal. So whether you have the spirit of dedication, the courage to face the failure of challenge, it is the problem the teachers who want to break the traditional concept have to face.

Now there are some problems in the curriculum checking systems of logistics education: such as ignoring the process evaluation, emphasizing the result of the exam, not giving enough chance for students to be creative and so on. Because of the checking system, students spend most of their time to focus on the theoretical study, how to get high marks in the exam, as a result, it is difficult to cultivate the comprehensive ability of the students.

The conditions of cultivating the innovative talents are insufficient. To cultivate the innovative talent, we should have the corresponding conditions. Now there is not enough equipment for students to operate, and the majority is to demonstrate—only the teachers operate the equipment to show how it work, and no chance for students to have a hands-on experience.

The first reason is that the equipment is expensive, if the students operate improperly, it will cost a lot to repair it. So the universities protect the equipment by limiting the usage to reduce the breakdown probability. Secondly, some schools have not enough funds to purchase the equipment which can offer the actual operation, and then they have to purchase the small or demonstrative one instead.

On the other hand, there is not enough space and teachers to strengthen the practical teaching. If the schools want to build the training room for practical teaching, they should obtain approval from the university to get enough space. Because the logistics equipment is not small at all, it is not easy to get the approval of the space.

Compared with the theory teaching, the practical teaching demands a lower faulty-student ratio to achieve the ideal result. But under the expansion of China' higher education system, theory teaching can't meet the needs of faulty-student ratio in some universities, not to mention the practical teaching.

In addition, it is common in China that the treat of teachers who teach practical courses is lower than teaching theory course, which influences the enthusiasm of teachers to devote themselves to practical teaching more or less.

The countermeasures of logistics talent training

Set up the talent training plan which can meet the requirements of society. All the talents are cultivated to meet the requirements of society, so when we set up the talent training plan, we should not only listen to the proposals from the logistics steering committee for education and instruction in higher education, but also try to know more about the thinking from the companies and graduates. Because the companies and graduates are those who know the best: they really know what kind of talents the enterprises need and what the training plan lacks. Now many colleges and universities have carried out the related investigation during the graduates and enterprise about the training plan, but the point is to solve the problem which find in the investigation.

In addition to the anonymous questionnaire investigation, universities can organize symposium regularly, invite the students at school, graduates and the employees together, to listen to complains

from them with patience and discuss the present problems, then all the stakeholders can face the problems together and find the way to solve them.

A point worth emphasizing is that the symposium should be fully prepared in advance: to list the questions what the universities want to ask and prepare the alternative solutions about the problems to discuss. Also the students and enterprises should be updated regularly to get more comprehensive information.

After several rounds of symposium and discussion, the universities will have an in-depth insight of the present talent training plan. Then it is time to have a complete revision of the training plan. When do the revisions, the revisers should consider the employers, students and the actual situation of the universities, especially to integrate the theory with practice. Once set up the rational practical teaching system about the logistics management, the time and the credits could not be modified discretionarily. It is forbidden to adjust or change the plan randomly.

Get diversified teaching resources from various sources. Lack of professional teachers is the most serious problems in logistics education. So the universities should attach importance to the professional teachers, and make corresponding preferential policies to attract them. Also the treatment of the experiment teachers should be improved to arouse the enthusiasm of them to devote themselves to the practical teaching. Because the practical courses need more experiment teachers to support the training plan, otherwise there will be a greatly reduced quality of the practical teaching in terms of not enough experiment teachers. Universities can consider the introduction of experiment teachers, or train part of the theory teachers to be experiment teachers and let them do double duty to fill in the gaps.

It is advised that the universities can establish the long-term effective collaboration relationship between universities and enterprises. The universities can invite the external trainers who are familiar with the situation of enterprises and have lots of practical experience to give lectures. If the students gain more knowledge about the hands-on experience, they can learn faster and do better at the beginning of their work. [3]

Now many universities have invited the well-known experts and scholars to give lectures to the students, but the lectures usually finish in two or three hours. In order to express the whole thing clearly, the lecturers have to summarize the concrete contents, which is just the students can't learn from their class. So usually the students can't fully absorb the lecture's ideas. More students want to let the experts and scholars provide a series of lectures to explain the actual content in work, not just one or two times a semester.

So the universities should think more methods to realize how to cultivate the comprehensive ability of the students, which will meet the needs of the society. Some students may want to select the course from other universities, and the universities' task is to establish the perfect system and build coalitions among other universities, so that students can select courses from one university to another, not only meet the needs of students, but also maximize the utilize of education resources.

To some universities which are far away from the student's, it is not convenient for students to select courses there. The way to solve the problem is to select teacher to study the course in that university, then come back to teach the course to the students in his own university. This study is not just observation; it is to join the class to learn as a student, so that you can fully understand how to organize the class and the key factors which we should pay more attention to as a teacher.

In order to utilize the human resources in the enterprises, universities can sign agreements on how to introduce teachers with them. As it mentioned before: a scholar or expert gives a lecture once or twice a semester --this situation should be changed, and the universities can use part of the tuition to support the teachers' introduction outside to make sure that they can cooperate with the university of its training plan actively. On the other hand, universities give the chance for the managers of enterprises to have a further education, and use this chance to invite them to give a series of lectures on practical work.

Also the universities can organize the students to practice in the enterprise for a period of time. In order to improve the quality of the practice, the universities can make some disciplines for the students to follow. First, emphasize the benefit of the practice and tell them that the practice has no

pay clearly. They can choose the practice voluntarily. Once they chose to practice in the enterprise, they should obey the enterprises' regulations. The universities can select the experienced teacher to lead them, avoid causing troubles to the enterprise, and give some subsidy to the enterprise to improve their motivation.

Teach inside and outside the classroom. On the teaching method, teachers should adopt new ideas and explore new ways. The teaching is not only in the classroom, but also extends to the guidance of the students' extracurricular activities.

In the class, the teachers should combine the theoretical knowledge with hot social issues to attract students' interest, to let them know their major is inseparable from our daily life.

During the teaching process, part of the simple theoretical knowledge can be arranged in advance to let them learn in groups, and explain the rationale to other groups. When the "teacher" is their classmate, they will pay more attention to the class, and have a better understanding. The teacher should give a supplementary if the students' explanation is not enough.

Also teacher can leave some questions to think, for example: the things reported in the news, or problems which have been a focus of attention. Then let them express their own ideas, and discuss with them to seek for a solution. This is a way to cultivate their abilities to solve the problems.

In addition, the teacher can bring the classroom into the lab, explaining while operating, which will be more impressive. Another way is to take students to visit the company, let them have a deeper understanding of the knowledge which they learn in the class. [4]

The teacher can also encourage students to participate in the research of teachers, which will improve their analytical skill and data collection ability. Some universities have given the students fund to support them to do the research, which can be learned by other universities. For the students who are interest in scientific research, the universities can select experienced teacher to guide them, to write down the inspirations in time and to convert them into research successfully. Then the level of talents cultivation will gradually been improved.

To participate in various competitions is another way to develop professional skills and cultivate the teamwork spirit. It is worth to mentioning that the National Logistics Design Contest, in which students have very high enthusiasm to participate. [5] During this contest, they can learn from each other because many team members are from different majors, and also they can have a deeper understanding of logistics, know the value of friendship, and gain more power from the team, which they can't learn in the class. And the teachers' spirit encourages and professional guidance is also necessary.

Some graduates would like to set up their own business, so the universities and government should give them some support from policy to fund.

The universities can also encourage the teachers to set up school-run factory in universities, and then employ the students to operate and manage it, which is the best way to take theory into practice.

Create favorable conditions to support the talents cultivation. The cultivation of comprehensive talent is inseparable from the support and cooperation in different areas.

First of all, from the inside, if the schools want to attract talents, construct laboratory and reform teaching methods, they should gain the support of funds and policy from the university. Otherwise, everything is moonshine.

If the universities have enough funds, they should actively support the construction of the training room. If the universities have not enough funds, they should build financial support platforms to help the school to gain outside resources.

In the innovation of teaching, the universities should allow some teachers to have a try of the new ideas to train the talents. If they succeed, the new way or new ideas should be promoted. [6]

From the outside, the government can encourage the companies to have an active cooperation with universities by providing some preferential policies, for example, relieve their tax burden. Only let the companies receive benefits from the cooperation, they will have enough motivation to do it continuously in the future.

Also if the universities buy equipment for teaching and training, the government can make policy to give discount to this specific use, which will relieve the universities' burden and give more chance for students to know them.

Conclusion

Any system can't be constructed and perfected in a short time, so it is with the logistics talent training. The improvement of logistics talent training is a long-term process, and it is necessary for university, student and society to work together to achieve the goal. We should continue to change our idea and accumulate practice experience to let the logistics talents meet the need of the society.

Acknowledgment

This paper is supported by "The education and teaching reform project of universities in Guangdong province in 2012": Research and practice of the construction of practical teaching system in logistics management major (NO: 2012374).

References

- [1] X. Y. Chen, and C. M. Feng, "Roadmap for the development and innovation of logistics education in China," *Logistics Technology*, vol.30, pp. 155-156, March 2011.
- [2] A. Q. Zhou, X. L. Luo, and L. Zhang, "Application of tutor group in logistics management professional talent training," *Logistics Technology*," vol.31, pp.158-159, April 2012.
- [3] Q. Zeng, "Research on training mode of logistics talents," *China Collective Economy*, vol. 12, pp. 155-156, April 2012.
- [4] M. Zhang, Y. P. Wu, and J. Luo, "Innovation and practice of applied talent cultivation mode in logistics management—using Huizhou University as an example," *Logistics Sci-Tech*, pp.58-60, December 2012.
- [5] R. H. Xie, G. H. Liu, M. S. Wang, and C. Guo, "The reform and practice on the training mode of logistics management application talents based on entrepreneurship orientation," *Logistics Engineering and Management*, vol. 34, pp.144-145, July 2012.
- [6] Z. Yan, X. Y. Deng, and X. L. Cai, "Practical course system construction with the aim of applied logistics management talent training," *Logistics Sci-Tech*, pp. 29-30, April 2011.