

Research on the Present Situation and Management Countermeasures of General Education Elective Courses in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract. The general education elective courses plays an important role in the talent cultivation system of colleges and universities. At present, there are many problems in the course setting, selection, teaching and examination of general education elective courses in colleges and universities, which has seriously affected the quality of teaching. This paper puts forward that management countermeasures should be taken to improve the teaching quality of general education elective courses, such as raising the level of understanding, constructing a reasonable course system, strengthening course management, strengthening the construction of teachers, and enhancing the enthusiasm of students.

1. Introduction

General education elective courses refer to non-professional courses offered by colleges and universities for the purpose of improving students' comprehensive quality, which can be freely chosen by students.[1]

In 1945, Harvard University released a report entitled *General Education in a Free Society*, which marked the birth of the modern university general education system. In the 21st century, general education has been widely implemented in Chinese universities. General education includes compulsory courses and elective courses. Generally, compulsory courses include ideological and moral cultivation, political theory, foreign language, physical education, computer science, military theory and so on. Other courses are elective courses.

General education emphasizes the intrinsic nature of education. Education itself and the state of being educated are its main aim, which is to produce well-rounded and valuable human beings.[2] At the national education conference in 2018, Xi stressed the need to "train socialist builders and successors who are well-rounded, morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically and labor" and "form a higher-level talent cultivation system." General education plays an irreplaceable role in the talent cultivation system of colleges and universities. Elective courses of general education can cultivate all-round talents with a solid foundation and a wide range of knowledge, and promote the all-round development of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor of college students.[3]

However, in recent years, the teaching quality of general education elective courses is not ideal. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the problems of general education elective courses and put forward countermeasures to improve the teaching quality.

2. Problems existing in general education elective courses of colleges and universities

2.1 Problems of course setting

Existing researches have found that the problems in the course setting of elective courses in general education mainly include: lack of systematic investigation, demonstration and research, lack of

top-level design, lack of continuity and stability, lack of comprehensive and cross-courses, lack of quality courses and specialty courses, etc.[4]

Furthermore, there is a lack of audit on the qualifications of teachers. Some universities approve the opening of courses, as long as teachers apply to open elective courses in general education, without considering teachers' research field, teaching experience, teaching ability, etc.

2.2 Problems of course selection

Many colleges and universities do not give enough publicity to general education elective courses. They only briefly introduce the courses and their teachers in a very short time before the course selection, so that students can only choose courses in a hurry after a quick browse.

In addition, students lack purpose in choosing courses. Under the influence of utilitarian psychology, some students choose courses that are easy to pass the examination. Some students follow the crowd and choose courses from other students without any plans or ideas of their own.

2.3 Problems of teaching

On the one hand, teachers often have the following three problems in the teaching process. Firstly, some teachers don't prepare their lessons carefully. The content is boring, and the method is single. It is difficult to attract students' interest. Secondly, some teachers adopt the same teaching method for general education elective courses as for professional courses, neglecting that the teaching objects are mostly students with non-related majors. Due to the limitation of class hours, knowledge cannot be explained in detail, which directly affects the teaching effect. Thirdly, generally speaking, the class size of general education elective courses is large, and some teachers do not manage the class order, resulting in chaos in the class.

On the other hand, students do not pay attention to the general education elective courses, and lack enthusiasm in class. Some students sit at the back of the classroom and do things that have nothing to do with the class, such as playing mobile phones, reading books of specialized courses, sleeping and so on. Some students even often skip classes.

2.4 Problems of examination

At present, there are two main examination methods of general education elective courses in colleges and universities: open-book examination and paper examination. The open-book examination mainly focuses on the analysis and discussion, and the paper examination mainly examines students' ability to analyze and solve practical problems with the knowledge they have learned. However, both of them are lack of judgment on the students' basic knowledge, and it is difficult for teachers to evaluate objectively.[5] Some students copy papers from the Internet, while teachers do not strictly review papers. The examination becomes a formality.

3. Management countermeasures to improve the teaching quality of general education elective courses in colleges and universities

3.1 Raising the level of understanding

It is important to realize that general education is not the supplement of professional education, but has the same importance as professional education. Although the elective course of general education has limited class hours and different teaching objects, it is of great significance to the overall development of students. Therefore, we must correct the teaching attitude of general elective courses.

3.2 Constructing a reasonable course system

General and professional education, compulsory and elective courses should be designed as a whole. The general education elective courses system must be changed from a hodgepodge of non-specialized courses. Based on students' learning interests and needs, it is necessary to integrate existing courses and add new ones, pay attention to the comprehensiveness and extensiveness of educational content.

3.3 Strengthening course management

Firstly, the audit mechanism should be improved. When applying for a new course, the teacher must apply to his departments. The director of the teaching and research office and the head of the department shall review the teacher's qualifications and teaching syllabus, and the academic affairs office shall organize relevant personnel to review the training objectives, teaching plans and teaching conditions. Experts from the academic committee or teaching steering committee then decide whether to open the course.

Secondly, the quality control should be strengthened. The supervisors and experts should be invited to attend lectures from time to time to give reasonable opinions and suggestions to teachers, so as to improve teaching quality. It is necessary to conduct online and offline student evaluation of teaching so as to understand students' satisfaction with courses and listen to students' opinions on class content, class progress, teaching means, teaching attitude and teaching effect. Random examination papers and student work is also a good method of quality control.

Thirdly, the elimination mechanism needs to be established. According to supervisors' and students' evaluation opinions, eliminate those courses with outdated content and poor teaching quality.

3.4 Strengthening the construction of teachers

High-level teachers, especially famous teachers, should be encouraged to offer more high-quality general education elective courses.

Teachers should be regularly organized to carry out teaching and research activities of elective courses in general education, and make reasonable teaching programs through communication and discussion. Good teachers can introduce advanced teaching concepts and spread successful teaching experience. In the teaching reform project, teachers should be encouraged to explore the teaching reform of general education elective courses. According to the actual situation, excellent teachers can be organized to compile textbooks for general education elective courses. In addition, special teaching competitions for general education elective courses can be organized regularly to improve teachers' enthusiasm and teaching level.

3.5 Enhancing the enthusiasm of students

Firstly, the course selection guidance should be strengthened. As soon as the new students enter the school, they should be introduced the plan of talent training and explained the significance of the general education elective courses, so that the students can choose the courses from the point of improving their own knowledge structure. The course selection system should set up a course selection operation guide to explain the course selection steps and matters needing attention. Information such as course introduction, teaching outline, teacher introduction and course video clips should be published in advance, so that students can fully understand the course and select courses according to their own needs.

Secondly, teaching methods should be improved. Discussion class and practice class can improve students' enthusiasm. Students can learn, think and apply knowledge in group discussion, debate, observation and practice. In addition, it can adopt a variety of examination methods, such as half-open book, oral examination, group defense, etc., and conduct comprehensive examination through a combination of various methods.

Thirdly, teachers should carefully count the students' attendance. Students who are absent too much should be disqualified from the examination.

4. Summary

This paper analyzed the existing problems in the course setting, selection, teaching and examination of general education elective courses in colleges and universities, and put forward that management countermeasures should be taken to improve the teaching quality of general education elective courses, such as raising the level of understanding, constructing a reasonable course system,

strengthening course management, strengthening the construction of teachers, and enhancing the enthusiasm of students.

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