

The Construction of Business Foreign Language Speciality Cluster in Application-oriented Universities*

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Abstract—At present, the training objectives of undergraduate education in China are mainly determined from the professional point of view, emphasizing professional quality. In March 2014, the Ministry of Education in China has clarified the reform direction: more than 600 of the 1200 general undergraduate colleges and universities in the country will gradually change to applied technology-based universities. Speciality cluster construction will provide a choice for the construction of application-oriented university. This paper sorts out the situation and relevant policies of the construction of speciality cluster in local application-oriented universities in some provinces and municipalities in China, analyses the necessity, basic concepts and specific measures of the construction of speciality cluster, and further explores the construction mode of speciality cluster in application-oriented universities.

Keywords—*application-oriented university; speciality cluster; construction mode; business foreign language speciality cluster*

I. INTRODUCTION

Speciality cluster is a cluster composed of several specialties with the same or closely related professional and technical foundation, which can cover a certain technology or service field and have the same basic curriculum and technical ability requirements. Majors in a speciality cluster can be majors in the same major category, or majors in different major categories. Whether they can be classified as a speciality cluster depends mainly on whether they have the common basic courses of professional technology and basic technical ability requirements [1]. At present, the professional quality emphasized by application-oriented undergraduate colleges and universities is difficult to meet the target requirements of personnel training in such universities, and the single goal of personnel training can not adapt to the rapid development of social and economic situation. The application-oriented undergraduate colleges and universities should take the vocational needs as the guidance to determine the goal of professional talent training. The research on the construction of business foreign language specialty cluster will break the original training mode of single specialty in applied

universities, construct the training mode of "General Education Platform Course + Foreign Language Professional Knowledge Module + Specialized Post Technology Module", and cultivate the compound talents who are excellent in foreign languages, economy and practice.

In recent years, many local colleges and universities have positioned as application-oriented colleges and universities, with the main task to serve the local economy and society and emphasize the cultivation of application-oriented talents. However, due to the obvious differences in the historical evolution, planning layout, development scale and professional types of local colleges and universities, it is their inevitable choice to constantly adjust to the direction of development and seek a suitable development model for themselves. In the "Outline of the National Medium-and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)" issued by the State Council in July 2010, it was clearly put forward that "to promote the characteristics of universities and colleges. Establish the classification system of colleges and universities and implement the classification management. Give full play to the role of policy guidance and resource allocation, guide universities to locate reasonably, overcome the tendency of homogeneity, form their own running ideas and styles, and create their own characteristics at different levels and in different fields, so as to strive to be the first-class colleges", which goal points out the development direction of local colleges and universities. At present, developing the construction of speciality clusters with great efforts has become the conscious choice of some application-oriented universities. This paper first sort out the situation and relevant policies of the construction of speciality clusters in local colleges and universities in some provinces and municipalities in China, and also analyzes the necessity, basic concepts and specific measures of the construction of speciality clusters, and further explores on the mode of the construction of speciality clusters in application-oriented colleges and universities, taking the construction of business foreign language speciality cluster in Heilongjiang Border College-Heihe University as an example.

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II. KEY RESEARCH POINTS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF INTERNATIONAL SPECIALITY CLUSTER

Universities in many countries around the world focus on the construction of speciality cluster, and thus promote the construction of enterprise-oriented universities, and the models are:

A. *Speciality Cluster Teaching Mode*

TAFE system in Australia, BTEC teaching in Britain, American community college, German "dual system" model, CBE in North America and ITE in Singapore all have their own characteristics and effectiveness in the construction of speciality cluster, and have initially formed an educational model that conforms to the economic development of various countries.

B. *Speciality Cluster Curriculum Construction*

Many universities not only provide uniform required courses (core courses), but also emphasize the full development of students' individual personality on the basis of fully providing comprehensive and systematic elective courses to cultivate their all-round development, integrate school development with regional economic development. The curriculum of the specialty is mainly based on the training objectives and business specifications of the specialty. On the basis of the core curriculum, the curriculum of other specialties is supplemented to meet the needs of applied compound talents.

III. THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL OF SPECIALITY CLUSTER IN CHINESE UNIVERSITIES

At present, the main method of implementing the construction of specialty cluster in application-oriented universities is to promote the integration and intersection of many related disciplines by optimizing the specialty type and hierarchical structure of disciplines, and to realize the matching with the needs of regional economic and social development. Take university as an example for analysis.

In recent years, Beijing has focused its development on promoting industrial restructuring and high-end development, strengthening the leading role of scientific and technological innovation, and upgrading the transformation of foreign trade and economy. In response to this situation, the education authorities in Beijing have steadily intensified the construction of speciality cluster in colleges and universities, encouraged municipal colleges and universities to make adjustments according to their own conditions, and enhanced their ability to serve the city's economic and social development. The first batch of major clusters in universities is supported by the city involve five major categories: machinery, computer and information, economy and trade, accounting and English. Among the first 10 pilot universities determined in 2011, there are six municipal universities, namely Beijing University of Information Technology, Beijing University of Technology, Capital University of Economics and Trade, Beijing University of Industry and Commerce, Capital Normal University. The development of speciality cluster in these universities is directly linked with the development goal of Beijing Municipal

Government's construction of "world city construction with Chinese characteristics".

In 2012, the 12th Five-Year Plan for Shanghai's Higher Education Reform and Development issued by the Shanghai Municipal Government defined the idea of "planning guidance, classified management, reform-driven, excellent development" for the development of higher education, and clearly put forward the establishment of a number of application-oriented colleges and universities serving Shanghai's local economic and social development and forming characteristics in personnel training.

The speciality cluster construction in the local general colleges and universities in Jiangsu Province has covered a wide range with relatively effective supporting policies, and therefore generate good results. Each university plays a demonstrating and leading role with the existing key specialties, and explores an effective mechanism for the construction of speciality cluster to meet the needs of the economic and social development for the shortage of professional and compound talents. As for the policies, Jiangsu Province vigorously supports the construction of speciality cluster. In the list of key speciality category/cluster of higher education projects published in September 2012 in Jiangsu Province, 202 key speciality clusters were identified, covering the whole province. Compared with other provinces, Jiangsu Province pays more attention to the construction of speciality cluster in higher vocational colleges. By strengthening the construction of characteristic speciality cluster, double-qualified teacher teams and key demonstration training bases, it will enhance the compatibility between vocational education system and modern industrial system, and guide universities to actively adapt to the needs of local economic and social development.

Zhejiang Province advocates the concept of "speciality cluster docking industry cluster, talent cluster directly linking with enterprise cluster" in the construction of speciality cluster in local colleges and universities, and emphasizes the connection between speciality cluster construction and industrial cluster. Specific measures include adding specialties urgently needed in industrial transformation and upgrading in Zhejiang Province, and developing related specialties in modern industry and agriculture, service industry, strategic emerging industries (especially marine economy).

Since the 11th Five-Year Plan, universities in Heilongjiang Province have taken the national key disciplines as the leading disciplines and gradually promoted the construction of disciplines clusters related to leading industrial clusters in modern agriculture, biomedicine, equipment manufacturing, and energy technology, initially forming a discipline distribution suitable for the construction of "eight economic zones" and "ten major projects" in Heilongjiang Province. At the same time, the construction of related specialty cluster has also been incorporated with the implementation and deployment of major strategic projects such as Songnen Plain and Sanjiang Plain Agricultural Comprehensive Development Experimental Zone, Ha-Da-Qi Industrial Corridor and East Coal and Electricity Comprehensive Development.

Through the analysis, it can be found that there are many similarities and obvious differences in the construction of speciality cluster in local colleges and universities in Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Heilongjiang. As for the same point, the speciality cluster is based on "a public technology platform, multiple professional directions", which has the same basic professional technology curriculum and basic technical ability (skills) requirements, and can cover a number of professional (directions) in a certain technology or service field[2]. The construction of speciality cluster in different provinces and cities should serve the local economic and social development, which clearly reflect the regional characteristics, and can not be separated from the attention and support of local governments and education departments. The difference is that metropolitan cities, like Beijing and Shanghai, emphasize the synchronization between the construction of university specialty cluster and the development of cities, while local universities pay more attention to meeting the various needs of urban development, in addition to building specialty cluster around the existing disciplines. In Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Heilongjiang provinces, the specialty clusters of colleges and universities focus more on the construction of industrial chain and professional post groups. The development of specialty cluster needs to focus on such factors as "modern industrial system" and "high-skilled talents". At the same time, at present, the construction of specialty cluster in colleges and universities is mostly confined to the model of school-based specialty cluster, and the construction model of cross-university specialty cluster can not be widely spread due to various subjective and objective reasons.

IV. CONSTRUCTION OF SINO-RUSSIAN BORDER BUSINESS FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPECIALTY CLUSTER

A. *Necessity of Construction*

A series of large-scale border trade centers have been built at the border ports between China and Russia, such as Heihe-Bragovishensk, forming the northern open zone of China. Therefore, the construction of business foreign language speciality cluster in colleges and universities in Heihe region has broad application prospects, which can not only play an important role in serving regional economy, developing science and technology, cultivating applied compound talents, and guiding cultural dissemination, but also help border colleges to find a way of characteristic development.

B. *Basic Conditions of Construction*

Some scholars believe that the key points of the construction of speciality cluster are the establishment and management of the manager position of speciality cluster, the expansion of speciality cluster, the composition of professional framework, the construction of teaching environment, the construction of school-based teaching materials, the training of "double teachers" and the education of students.[3] As the only general undergraduate college along the border between China and Russia, Heihe University is the implementer and explorer of Heilongjiang Province's strategy of "strengthening Heilongjiang Province by higher education", undertaking the task of providing intellectual support and service guarantee for

local economic and social development in Heihe region. The Russian School and the English School of the Foreign Languages Department of the college have set up the direction of business Russian and business English respectively. It is feasible to set up the core of business foreign language speciality cluster with high level relying on the existing social influence and professional foundation of Russian and English majors, a relatively perfect teaching team and relatively mature training conditions both inside and outside schools. However, the School of Economic Management and the School of Culture and Tourism have many majors, such as International Economy and Trade, Accounting, Logistics Management, Financial Accounting, Law and Tourism Management, belong to the three disciplines of Economics, Management and Law, which can make an important supplement to the construction of business foreign language speciality cluster and realize the sharing of resources such as teachers and equipment. At present, the interweaving degree of curriculum network of various specialties is constantly improving: the second foreign language curriculum of English and Russian specialties complemented with each other. This has achieved resource sharing to a certain extent, and provided a preliminary basis for the construction of business foreign language group.

C. *Implementing the Construction of Business Foreign Language Specialty Cluster in Multiple Aspects*

Heihe University is currently focusing on strengthening the construction of business foreign language speciality cluster from four levels. Firstly, at the college level, the existing division of departments and majors in administration and teaching has been gradually changed, with the mode of "General Education Platform Course + Foreign Language Professional Knowledge Module + Specialized Post Technology Module", forming a speciality cluster framework with business English, business Russian as the core and international economy and trade, accounting, logistics management, financial accounting, law and tourism management as the support. Secondly, relying on the advantages of various professional teachers who have been included in the speciality cluster, it has formed a joint force in teaching, focusing on cultivating compound talents to cope with the changing situation of popular majors in the market, and at the same time, to a certain extent, it has realized the low investment and high returns in the teaching process. Finally, the mode of "school-enterprise interaction" is being further improved in the cooperative enterprises. The relevant foreign trade enterprises in Heihe City arrange students' internship and practice according to their job requirements periodically. At the same time, the enterprises can also feedback more accurate employment needs and teaching adjustment opinions to the college, and constantly improve the development of speciality cluster.

D. *Problems in the Construction of Business Foreign Language Specialty Cluster*

There are three difficult problems, far away from the economic centers of China and Russia, relatively remote geographical location, and imperfect professional setting standards in professional groups and lack of infrastructure. First of all, the geographical location of Heihe University, a

border university, has increased the difficulty of accumulating various elements in the construction of speciality cluster. To carry out the construction of speciality cluster, it is necessary to speed up the pace of the construction of school-based speciality cluster, enhance the communication with other domestic colleges and universities with the same speciality cluster, and create opportunities for the co-construction of related specialties with Russian universities. Secondly, the relevant majors in the professional group should be set up according to the social needs and own characteristic. The newly established specialties should emphasize the adjustment of economic society and industrial structure, and regard this change as a barometer of specialty settings.

V. CONCLUSION

The construction of speciality cluster in application-oriented universities needs to take into account comprehensive factors and attach equal importance to flexibility and stability in the process of building speciality cluster. It is difficult to train high-quality talents or even waste educational resources because of the lack of stable specialty settings. Colleges and universities should build speciality cluster according to market demand on the premise of keeping specialty relatively stable. College undergraduate training has the characteristics of long cycle, which requires professional setting to be forward-looking and meet the needs of local economic development. In addition to these common points, it is also necessary to consider such issues as "basic education and character building, professional education and innovation enlightenment, speciality cluster construction and social needs". Therefore, only through continuous running-in and practice, accepting the common test of society and enterprises, can a stronger impetus for the development and promotion of local colleges and universities be truly provided.

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