

Case Analysis and Exploration of Practical Teaching Approaches in E-commerce Specialty

Take Nanfang College of Sun Yat-sen University for Example

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Abstract—There exists a dilemma for professional colleges and enterprises today: while both the graduates and demand for talents in e-commerce field are increasing rapidly, it is hard for graduates to find jobs and for enterprises to recruit talents. Based on the wide and deep investigation, the reason is found: most professional colleges have big problems in their teaching mode. They teach in a traditional way which focuses primarily on theoretical knowledge teaching and overlooks practical training and practical operation ability cultivating so that their graduates can not meet the practical quality requirement of enterprises. In this context, the e-commerce department at Nanfang College of Sun Yat-sen University proposed a new practical training program based on the strategy mainly consisting of three aspects: practice motivating study, contests promoting study and business combining with research. It has been proved by years of execution of this new training program at Nanfang College of Sun Yat-sen University that the practical training strategy can solved the weak practical operation ability problem of graduates and mitigate the employment and recruitment dilemma to a great degree.

Keywords—*practical teaching; reform; training; e-commerce; entrepreneurial*

I. INTRODUCTION

The demand by enterprises and public institutions for talents engaging in e-commerce operation increases significantly with the rapid development and wide application of internet. While many professional colleges open e-commerce specialty for undergraduates and the number of students educated in this field increases annually, the dilemma appears in job markets: It is difficult for graduates to find jobs and for enterprises to hire employees[1]. The investigation into education plans for e-commerce specialty of many colleges combined with the rational analysis on the demand of employers for e-commerce talents suggests that the poor practical ability of e-commerce talents graduating from

professional colleges today can't meet the requirement of enterprises and public institutions for talents in e-commerce field. The traditional teaching mode, which focuses on imparting knowledge and often overlooks improving practical ability[2], is the main reason for this dilemma. In this context, Nanfang College of Sun Yat-sen University has been exploring how to break the constraint of traditional teaching mode and created practical education program for e-commerce specialty aiming at improving the practical, innovating and entrepreneurial ability of students.

At present, the popular practical teaching modes in most colleges fall into two categories[3]: In the first category, the practical training is simulated with related teaching softwares in the laboratory on campus. Obviously, the simulation is different from actual operation. In the second category, the practical training is conducted in the practical training bases or companies outside the campus. There are still lots of problems in this way although it is close to real situation[4]. For example: (1) The practicing time is limited, the practicing scope is not comprehensive enough, the students don't participate actively, and it is hard for colleges and enterprises to cooperate deeply; (2) There is big difficulty in teaching management since most students scatter in different enterprises and the problems encountered by students during their practical training can't be analyzed and solved immediately. The students can't receive true practical training fully and directly before the real practical training environments and programs are established. After years of exploration and research, the department of e-commerce in our college has reached the following achievements: (1) establishing training program which keeps pace with market and is correspondent to the standards and codes of professional positions in enterprises; (2) initiated by the cooperation between college and enterprises and led by the combination of business and research and contest and practice, conducting practical training activities within campus and

beyond simultaneously and establishing gradually the practical training approaches in which the study is led by practice and promoted by contest and the business is combined with research. These approaches solved the weak problems of social practice training in e-commerce specialty and saw the preliminary effects on cultivating innovation spirit of students and improving practical ability of students. The concrete execution measures by our college will be described in detail below.

II. UNDER THE CONCEPT OF 'PRACTICE MOTIVATING STUDY', THE STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE VARIOUS PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES UNDER THE GUIDE OF ENTERPRISES AND SPECIAL TEACHERS SO THAT THE INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL PRACTICAL ABILITY OF STUDENTS CAN BE IMPROVED CONTINUOUSLY

A. Design of This Program

The education of e-commerce talents in professional colleges focuses more on the improvement of comprehensive and practical ability. For the e-commerce itself, practical ability is placed on the priority position. So the practical training is more critical in the process of professional talent cultivating in colleges. The simulation training mode must be abandoned in practical training in e-commerce specialty since it is a teaching mode without changes and any economic pressure from market and students can't learn any truly necessary knowledge but the process of commercial activities. In order to avoid the disadvantage of simulation training, professional colleges can cooperate with enterprises deeply and introduce e-commerce activities from enterprises so that teachers can direct students with the cases of projects and students can exercise and practice according to the cases of projects. The projects can also be placed into the real internet environment and tested by market and society. In this way, enterprises can take part in the cooperation between colleges and enterprises deeply and can give advices and suggestions about cultivation of talents truly demanded by market; students can keep great interests and develop quickly through the practicing of fully real projects; And teachers can catch up with the trend of market and can update their knowledge easily. Our college cooperated with enterprises such as taobao university and baidu, etc. since 2012. During the cooperation, courses such as *practical training of online shop running* and *real scene exercise for search engine*, etc were co-developed. Every student in e-commerce is required to open and run online shop mandatorily for real practice in his or her first year of college. Additionally, some organizations such as 'self-entrepreneurial studio of C2C network', 'outsourcing studio of B2B e-commerce App.', association of baidu baike, association of logistics, etc. were established one after another during the cooperation. The directing groups are made of professionals from enterprises and special teachers from our college in these organizations. Students are adopted into these organizations with their wills fully respected to study and participate in all kinds of project training under the guide of special teachers. By these activities, the innovation and entrepreneurial practical abilities of students are expected to be improved. Students are also encouraged to take care of Tmall or taobao shops for enterprises, to apply for 'customer

service personnels for online shops', and to find jobs before running their own businesses except to run their own businesses on C2C platform 'taobao' website. After years of teaching practice, good effects have been seen.

B. Entrepreneurial Achievement of This Program

So far, the number of taobao online shops being run by students has exceeded 300. The baby carrier shop run by a student Xu has reached the honor of four 'imperial crown' after years of development from scratch in college. What's more, his shop has open flagship shops on the platforms such as tmall, jingdong and suning yigou, etc.. The annual sale of his shops has broken through 20 million yuan, which makes him a real student boss.

C. Cooperation Achievement of This Program

Students are also encouraged to persist running e-commerce or engaging in customer service job for other enterprises in their spare time in order to improve their own practical ability and prepare for their future job or businesses. Huang Biji is the prominent representative among them. Huang Biji was honored to be one of the bellmen when ALIBABA was listed at New York stock exchange on Sept. 19, 2014 and she also was the youngest bellman. Huang Biji joined in 'cloud customer service' team in taobao and served as 'customer service personel' as partime job in her spare time as early as she first went to her college. During her years of college, she has served more than 16000 taobao members and the satisfactory ratio of customer's evaluation is very high. In our college, more than 100 students like Huang Biji persist practicing as customer service personnel in their spare time under the guide of their teachers.

III. UNDER THE CONCEPT OF 'CONTEST PROMOTING STUDY', STIMULATING THE INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ABILITY OF STUDENTS THROUGH DISCIPLINE CONTEST BY ESTABLISHING CONTEST TEAM OF STUDENTS

How to cultivate the 'high quality skillful talents' meeting the personnel demand in e-commerce field today is an issue urgent to be solved for current professional colleges. There are two advantages proceeding the research of reforming talent cultivation mode promoted by discipline contest in e-commerce field at professional colleges: first, this research can promote teaching reform, improve teaching quality, cultivate students' comprehensive quality, and optimize the process of talent cultivation in e-commerce field at professional colleges; Second, this research can strengthen the employment and entrepreneurial consciousness of students in e-commerce field at professional colleges and cultivate the creative thought, innovation consciousness and entrepreneurial ability of college students in e-commerce field. In order to motivate the innovation spirit and improve the practical ability of students, the e-commerce department of our college have conducted extra curriculum of scholar, science and technology, established a guide team made of mainstay teachers to direct the e-commerce discipline contest, and formed gradually discipline contest system consisting series of games such as 'game of information technology among college students

nationwide’, ‘e-commerce game of ‘innovation, creation and entrepreneur’ among college students nationwide’, ‘challenge cup’ game of science and technology works of national college students, and national college students’ game of internet business innovation and application, etc. since 2012. Discipline contest is an activity linked intimately to teaching, and it is an effective way to test the ability of contenders to apply theoretical knowledge, solve practical problems and innovate and run business. The results of contests chiefly reflect the ability of students to understanding and using of knowledge and the physical quality, psychological quality and collaboration spirit of students. Students can practice and exhibit their innovation consciousness, business ability and personality through taking part in all kinds of contests of e-commerce. In recent years, the students of our college have won more than 80 national and provincial games. Cellphone App. for college life circle, which targets campus life and was developed by a five-student team of Peng Wei, Zhen Jieyi, Huang Shaodang, Wan Jian, and Zheng Leqing, won special prize and best innovation prize in the fourth national college game of ‘innovation, creation and business’ in e-commerce field. This game was sponsored by e-commerce education direction commission at Chinese education ministry. Our students in this team become the first independent college students who win the special honor since the game was born. The App. developed by our student team has caught great attention of stake investment experts and received tens of thousands of RMB stake investment. The program is going very well now.

Of course, students can also get lots of chance of internship or part-time jobs offered by hosts and sponsors while they attend to all kinds of contests. Today, more and more students take part in the discipline contests which can not only motivate the innovation and business potential of students, but also pave a firm path for their own business in the future.

IV. UNDER THE CONCEPT OF ‘BUSINESS COMBINING WITH RESEARCH’, ESTABLISHING RESEARCH TEAM OF STUDENTS TO COMBINE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION WITH ENTREPRENEURIAL PRACTICE AND DIGEST AND SUBLIME THE THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE LEARNED IN RESEARCH ACTIVITY

In order to respect the individual development of students, meet the desire of some students to further study and cultivate the scholarship innovation spirit of students, students in e-commerce field at our college are encouraged to take part in scholarship innovation activities and research program of their teachers. The fairly able junior or senior students will be recommended to participate in their teachers’ research activities under the teachers’ guide. If possible, their research program can be their design project for graduation. According to international research experience and the characteristic of our college students, teachers guide students to plan their social practice, programs and research step by step. So far, many students have published related papers on the national and international journals. The practical training guide textbook ‘*online shop practice*’ was coedited by students and their mentors and it is popular by students because it can hit the point.

V. FRUITFUL AND IMPRESSIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

A. *The Practical Innovation Ability of Students Is Improved*

Students are the biggest winners of our programs. The practical innovation ability of students in our department is improved significantly since our programs started. Three years on, the students in our department have funded by one national and more 30 provincial college student innovation and entrepreneurial training programs and all the programs are going very well. First, a pile of research papers are published on critical journals and some of them are even indexed by EI; Second, investigation reports are published and physical works are designed and fabricated. The students in our department also won many prizes in various national and international major games. So far, almost half of students in grade 2012 have received job offers from major e-commerce companies within China or beyond even their graduation is not due.

B. *The Teaching Skill and Quality of Teachers Is Improved Significantly*

Teachers are also the winners of our programs. In the process of establishing and implementing of our new practical teaching programs, most of specialty teachers have a profound understanding of scientific implication of practical teaching and the necessity and significance of comprehensively pushing forward practical teaching. What’s more, our programs also can provoke teachers to criticize and reflect the filling, feeding and one-way theoretical teaching methods in traditional ways. Teachers can not only cultivate their own practical ability quickly and grow into engineers besides teachers gradually through taking part in conducting various practical teaching activities and directing students participating contest carefully, but also enhance their own professional quality and improve their teaching skill and quality through combining their directing experience of programs with teaching in class, permitting students playing more significant role in the theoretical teaching activities in class, focusing more on the interactivity between students and teachers and on the unification of teaching and learning and carrying out series of reform and innovation on organization forms, interpreting methods and teaching means in theoretical teaching in class.

C. *The Relatively Stable Practical Training Bases and Training Programs Co-developed by Colleges and Enterprises Are a Win-win Situation for the Development of Both Sides*

The practical feature of e-commerce education determines the importance of establishing practical training bases. One important thing in conducting practical teaching is to establish long-term cooperation partnership with enterprises and long-term stable practical training bases. In addition to organize students to enter enterprises to study, communicate, understand the demand of enterprises and experience the practical operation of enterprises, we also cooperate with enterprises to research and develop training programs and invite senior engineers from enterprises to teach on campus so that the demand of enterprises and the latest technology can be incorporated into class, students can realize the importance

of combining theory with practice, the talents cultivated can meet the demand and requirement of enterprises and eventually, the dilemma of 'recruit difficulty' for enterprises and 'finding job difficulty' for graduates can be solved.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The teaching mode of 'practice promoting study, contests promoting study and combining business with research' proposed by the e-commerce department at Nangfang College of Sun Yat-sen University is very effective in teaching. 'practice promoting study' is a beneficial trial for both colleges and enterprises. It is a real cooperation and win-win situation for both sides. It also can improve the comprehensive quality and professional skills and compensate the shortage of teaching on campus, so it is a creative exploration with professional college education feature. 'contests promoting study' can better motivate the study interest of students, enrich the extra curriculum activities of students, promote students to study theoretical knowledge of e-commerce without stop during the whole process of contest, improve the operation skill of students gradually, help students understand and use knowledge from multi-disciplines flexibly and freely, play a

significant role in cultivating the students' good quality of persistence, non-stop studying and profession, help college to increase its social influence and reputation and increase students' employment competitiveness. 'business combining with research' can also promote students to review practical activities so as to sublime their theoretical knowledge significantly and as to provide foundation of practical teaching in e-commerce field for our college and our peers.

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