

Study on Cultivation of Business Skilled Talents

From the Perspective of Business Courses Teaching

Xin Cheng

School of Trade Logistics
Jiangsu Institute of Commerce
Nanjing, China

Abstract—Facing the ever-changing and fast-developing trend of the world's economy in the new circumstance, cultivation of business skilled talents should be brought into full play in China in her way of rapid advancing. Thus made for this purpose are analyses of the current situation, the merits and demerits, the social needs, the business courses teaching methodology and the qualifications required of business teachers. The study on cultivation of business skilled talents, especially from the perspective of business courses teaching is bound to become more and more important in China as well as elsewhere in the world.

Keywords—business skilled talents; status quo; business courses teaching; social needs; business teachers' qualifications

I. INTRODUCTION

The general trend of the world economic development in the 21st century is characterized by the economic globalization and integration. In this era both developed and developing countries are confronted with historic opportunities and current challenges. As global forces deeply impact international business around the world, educators are looking for ways to provide necessary knowledge and skills in business education curricula to develop competitive and competent students who are prepared for the global economy. So is China. Since the adoption of the reform and opening policy and especially China's entering into the WTO, tremendous changes have taken place in our country. Now China has become one of the world's trade giants, which will make foreseeable the quick expansion of the business scope and still more frequent contacts with the outside world. Naturally, greater and greater importance is attached to cultivation of business skilled talents, and higher and higher qualifications are required of our business personnel.

II. STATUS QUO OF BUSINESS COURSES TEACHING IN CHINA

In process of China's leaping forward, especially in her economic development and contacts with foreign countries, more and more generally used is international business knowledge such as business English, business trade, business management, business marketing, business law, etc, which has come into full play in all the national and international

economic organizations and activities, and which has been widely accepted as a utilitarian tool for national development and modernization. The study of business and business English is regarded as necessary for acquiring technological expertise from abroad and for fostering international trade.

The government considers it a key element of national development to train significant numbers of qualified "multifaceted talents" who have a good command both of business and of English in a whole range of professions, workplaces and enterprises.

Fascinating results have been brought about since the nineties last century through the recognition by the whole nation of the great importance and the urgent needs of business courses teaching and the untiring efforts made to improve it. With the rapid development of the whole education, business courses teaching has also made encouraging progress. Business courses in multifarious contents have been established for university and college students in the teaching projects. The teaching programs and methods have been renewed from time to time to have the comprehensive skills wisely combined with the business profession. More and more business textbooks, theses and reference books on business have been published. A large number of students majoring in business have graduated from universities and colleges and become qualified international business or foreign trade personnel, thus meeting the needs of our expanding foreign trade and international business. Nowadays, a lot of national symposia of international business courses teaching have been held in universities and colleges. And the most important sign is the establishment of the International Business English Teaching and Research Committee of China's International Trade Society, which represents a picture of prosperity in business and business English teaching and research and achieves new success every year.

However, achievements can by no means offset defects in the business teaching. At least the three under mentioned current aspects need paying great attention to:

A. A disconnection between the universities and the companies

Business courses teaching aims at cultivating the business majored students or personnel into a composite type excellent not only in business, but also in foreign languages,

Fund Project: Supported by Jiangsu Provincial University Philosophy and Social Science Research Fund: Study on Cultivating the Core Competence of Business Skilled Talents in Universities and Colleges of Jiangsu Province — based on the perspective of USEM (Project Number: 2014SJB290)

network, teamwork and creation. These students or personnel are just like products, which are manufactured from the factories—universities and colleges, to be put into the markets—companies. But until now many people do not know what kind of personnel is actually needed and what fundamental skills students/and personnel are required to grasp. And it is a little too late for the present mere link between universities/colleges and companies to have two or three months attachment to companies for the third-year or fourth-year students.

B. Theoretical knowledge centered teaching materials

Serious criticisms have it that some of the business courses teaching materials are not in a position to satisfy our domestic needs and the contents of them are often irrelevant, overly theoretical, or far removed from the international business practice and the existing problems in China. That’s why some graduates or trainees often find themselves better able to do written exercises or take examinations than to make business telephone conversations, business negotiations or sales presentations, weak at international working capacity and corporation’s business performance, and having a lot of troubles dealing with international business activities and their specific work.

C. A teacher-centered teaching environment

Some business teachers or trainers are still used to conducting their business classes in the traditional way, or the so called Confucian teaching style, in which they do most of the talking and lecturing, leaving few opportunities for students to think or even ask questions, and making the students passive receivers, who are thus trained obedient to their teachers instead of getting freedom to develop themselves or to learn things initiatively.

III. A SURVEY OF SOCIAL NEEDS AND THE ANALYSIS

In the process of business teaching and learning, it is the student who plays dominant role. instead of being a passive receiver, the student would exploit various cognitive and affective factors to cope with business knowledge and skills, among which motivation is the essential part. Motivation in business learning is a complex concept, including students desire to achieve the goal, sense of achievement, etc. Gardner and MacIntye regarded this kind of motivation as “instrumental motivation”, which is the desire to learn business or business English in order to attain certain career, educational or financial goals. Such kind of motivation in business learning is often influenced by some factors. The government’s policy, cultural and economic factors, and especially social needs will exert influence on the students’ business learning state. In this respect, we have recently made a survey of our graduates’ employment rate and import/export corporations’ needs for university and college graduates, so as to elicit some information about the actual social needs for business speciality in higher education.

The following “Table I” is based on a follow-up investigation on employment of the graduates in our college. These students who majored in international business, and

commerce and trade, graduated in 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively.

TABLE I. PLACE OF WORK

Place of work	Percentage %
private import/export corp.(civilian-run enterprises)	29%
state-owned import/export corp.	23%
further studies at home and abroad	12%
foreign trade transportation company (by sea or by air)	11%
logistics enterprise	9%
bank	8%
doing pioneering work	6%
others	2%

The following “Table II” is based on an investigation on some state-owned import/export corporations. In the first column we can see the majors of the students whom the corporations have taken, and in the second and third ones are listed percentage that the number of students of different majors accounts for in the period (2010-2012) and the period (2013-2015).

TABLE II. MAJORS OF STUDENTS

Majors of students	2010-2012	2013-2015
business (international business/ commerce and trade/ business management)	58%	56%
finance (financial management/ foreign accounting/ international finance)	14%	11%
foreign language(English, French, Spanish)	10%	13%
machinery electronic engineering textiles chemical industry ...	18%	20%

Statistic analysis:

“Table I” is a very good record of the employment of graduates majoring in business. The percentage of graduates working in both private and state-owned import/export corporations is 52% (29% + 23%). The percentage of graduates who are working at transportation companies and logistics enterprises is 20% (11% + 9%), and actually these graduates’ jobs also have something to do with business. Thus the total percentage is 72%.

From “Table II” we can find that there is a low-decrease demand for students majoring in business from the period (2010-2012) to the period (2013-2015), but the number of students majoring in business is about 3—5 times that of students majoring in finance, foreign language, machinery, i.e. business majors are still over-whelmingly superior to those of other specialities. In a sense, the students of business

have a bright future in their employment and career in the field of international business and foreign trade.

The above investigation presents one aspect of the present situation: there exists a large demand for business and trade personnel who have good proficiency in international business. Alongside the increasing growth of booming market economy, our society is developing very quickly. So is our foreign trade. Business teaching should gear to the actual social needs. If we make common efforts and do a good job in business teaching, it will certainly have a broad prospect. The above social needs points out the direction of business teaching, and is also an immeasurable and decisive factor that influences the contents, methods and design features of business teaching. For this purpose, we think it necessary to further discuss the theories of business teaching so as to guide our thinking and practice.

IV. DESIGN FEATURES OF BUSINESS COURSES

Business courses should involve three design features: duality, concentration and operation.

Duality is meant that business courses should contain two subsystems, one of career and the other of practical essentials. In this way, business has a basic economy, which can be further divided into a discrete number of business sectors and an infinite number of units or lessons to show its variety, and business English is its presenting media.

Concentration refers to the fact that business courses provide a kind of information in each particular area, which is further derived from the general root business, though somewhat related, such as business law, business management, business marketing, business English and so on. All bear their own peculiarities and need concentrating on.

Operation, here as a special terminology, can be used to refer to professional and technical issues. We think that it is important and necessary to apply business theories and business teaching methods to the practice within a simulated business environment. Misunderstanding of this terminology often causes confusion and makes operation impossible. Within the broad theoretical framework, various approaches and methods can be taken for acquiring a more realistic understanding on how to make effective business operations.

V. BUSINESS COURSE SYSTEMS

Course designing is of decisive and practical importance and value. Business courses must reflect the skills and content needs of the learners at an appropriate level. According to China's actual situation in higher education, business courses may fall into the following two categories so as to be tailored closely to the practical needs.

- Basic courses in business teaching are the first requisition, which includes business correspondence, business conversation, foreign business newspaper reading, business English writing, etc.
- Professional courses refer to international trade, import and export business, international finance, business law, investment, marketing, banking, etc.

Some of them are optional courses and can be selected according to the learner's research direction. With rapid development of the world economy and information technology, new concepts like public relations, transnational corporation, E-business, international technical cooperation, international conference and symposia, cross-cultural communication and international business negotiation, etc. should also be introduced.

All these courses aim at guiding the students into the business world and discussing with them how to do business and how to face the business world by applying the book knowledge to practice. For this purpose, Ellis and Johnson made a list of broad performance areas: meetings and discussions, giving business information, business telephoning, business correspondence and socializing. These they seem to take as the core components of business courses. Each of them is then subdivided into two constituent parts: skill components and language functions. The "skill components" mean behavior skills in business settings, such as business procedures and behaviors involved in the performance area. The "language functions" are concepts of communication, reminiscent of linguistic acts.

Last but not least, teaching materials, as the basis of all courses and the tools of education, should be appropriately compiled so as to provide a bridge between the business skills of learners and their professional knowledge goals.

VI. BUSINESS TEACHING METHODOLOGY

The best teaching method is what brings the teacher's abilities into full play and raises the student's business knowledge and skills to the desired level. Successful business teaching requires the use of flexible methods on the basis of variables such as course nature, textbooks adopted, students' resources and teaching conditions, just as the English proverb goes: "All roads lead to Rome." While Rome is taken as the goal, our measures or methods are to facilitate the travelers or learners to reach it effectively and quickly.

What is important is that instead of teacher-centered environment, participant/student-centered, interactive and practical methodologies should be persisted, the communicative approach further increased, and the multimedia teaching method also introduced, which, in fact, is superior to the traditional method as it allows the students to use the visual aids and study individually to meet their own needs. Teachers, as controllers and facilitators, must provide the nurturing context for learning and not see their mission as one of rather programmatically feeding students quantities of knowledge which they subsequently devour. Guided by the principle that students should be able to choose whatever they want to learn, classroom activities may take the form of role plays, problem-solving, decision-making, team-building tasks, simulations, case studies, projects and oral presentations. Besides broadening the students range of knowledge in business profession, the best way for teachers is to add some apt words, sentences or examples to clinch the point they are studying and to give

them a lot of opportunities to practice themselves first in classrooms and later in companies, joint ventures, banks and so on, so as to enable them to get the first hand information and useful skills they need for their future careers.

Also highly necessary for our business teachers is to impart to the students some knowledge about the differences between Chinese and foreign cultures. These differences manifest themselves in the different cultural background, different religious beliefs, customs, habits and business practice of people coming from different countries. A full understanding of all these differences, especially those in business cultures may cultivate students' transcultural intercourse ability and better arm the students to win their future battles in international business. So business teaching is also transculture studying.

VII. QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED OF BUSINESS TEACHERS

A qualified teacher of business, especially international business should be double-talented. That is to say, he or she should be expert both in English and in business theories and practice, so that he can understand how to give free rein to his English knowledge in his business teaching and can accordingly put forward a teaching goal and work out a series of teaching schemes to reach it. Moreover, a qualified teacher should frequently go among managers, businessmen and bankers, and read as much as possible the latest business data both in books and in periodicals from developed countries, especially from the USA and the European Union, so as to acquaint himself/herself with the aforesaid people's work functions and peculiarities and the up-to-date information about the business world, and thus make possible his teaching lively, figurative and effective.

Still better is it that the teacher has had experiences of working abroad or in the business walks. For he can apply into his teaching his experience gained in his past corporation management or administration, and, as goes the Chinese proverb, he may "get twice the result (in his teaching) with half the effort".

In addition to the required double-faceted knowledge and the experiences, superior individual capability and character are also qualifications essential for a good business teacher. He should be not only diplomatic in dealing with various kinds of people, but also endowed with discussion talent. And he should also have a keen interest in and curiosity about business affairs.

VIII. CONCLUSION

With a view to making business teaching keeping up with the world's ever-developing economic situation, we have to establish a vigorous business education system with Chinese characteristics, so as to implement quality-oriented education, nurture specialized business personnel and encourage originality in students to improve their practical abilities. Therefore, educational ideas and concepts should be advanced, curriculum offerings updated, teaching contents and methodology renewed, and the teaching objectives aligned with the business practice.

Full of confidence, we can foresee that in the near future, even brighter prospects will present themselves before business teaching, which will bring forward new research orientation and still higher standard. Business courses will undoubtedly fall into the required curricula for colleges and universities. It can also stride into the world through offering business teaching for transnational companies. Therefore, the principle of business materials compiling suitable for different levels remains a problem to be urgently resolved. And the analysis of actual needs for business to satisfy the demanding trend is to be constantly done. As business teaching develops in terms of diversity, richness and depth, the demands placed on the business teachers are ever increasing. Heavy is the burden on a business teacher's shoulder, long is the road ahead of him.

REFERENCES

- [1] Marin, D. & Verdier, T. Globalization and the empowerment of talent, *Journal of International Economics*, 2012.
- [2] Adamson, B. & P. Morris. The English curriculum in the People's Republic of China, *Comparative Education Review*, 1997.
- [3] Akcam Bahadir K, Guler, A. & Hekim, H. Freshman and Sophomore Business Students' Perception of Global Forces, *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 2012.
- [4] Clark, S C. Enhancing the educational value of business internships, *Journal of Management Education*, 2003.
- [5] Cortazzi, M. & L. Jin. English teaching and learning in China, *Language Teaching*, 1996.
- [6] Ellis, M.& Johnson, C. *Teaching Business English*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- [7] Gardner, R.C.& MacIntyre, P.D. *A Student's Contribution to Second Language Learning*.
- [8] London: Cambridge University, 1993.