

# Exploration of Practical Teaching Reform for Marketing Training Course in the Digital Context

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**Abstract:** Taking the practical course Marketing Training for marketing majors as the research object, this paper explores how to reform practical teaching courses in the context of educational digitalization. Through analyzing the current situation of practical teaching, it identifies four key challenges: difficulties in integrating theory with practice, applying theoretical knowledge, expanding learning outcomes, and transforming professional knowledge into practical abilities. A teaching design is proposed from four dimensions, “learning theory, practicing skills, competing for achievements, and cultivating literacy,” along with corresponding solutions.

**Keywords:** Digitalization; Marketing training; Practical teaching

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## 1. Research status

Amid the wave of information technologies such as big data, the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality, the development and evolution of large-scale, sustainable, and interactive virtual spaces have become a highlight of the informatization transformation of practical teaching in higher education. Li Hong from Chongqing Technology and Business University built an integrated teaching platform featuring “O2O collaboration + process simulation” using the Internet + cloud computing + big data, constructing an experimental teaching system of “core competency orientation + professional group-led entrepreneurial chain simulation” to expand the boundaries of “economic management virtual simulation experiments” and enrich the virtual simulation experimental teaching system for economic management<sup>[1]</sup>. Cheng Peiyan from Shanxi University of Finance and Economics proposed a “practice-simulation-practice” approach for entrepreneurship simulation training, integrating entrepreneurial simulation training and practical training, which not only stimulates students’ learning interest but also cultivates the knowledge, abilities, and literacy required for entrepreneurial practice<sup>[2]</sup>. Wang Na from Huaqiao University argued that virtual simulation experimental teaching for economics and management majors should aim to develop students’ sustainable comprehensive knowledge, thinking, and abilities, constructing an integrated teaching system for knowledge implementation and quality cultivation<sup>[3]</sup>.

Currently, universities are paying increasing attention to students' practical abilities, and training courses and practical sections within courses are widely offered. These training formats have stimulated students' enthusiasm and improved their practical abilities. However, these methods remain teacher-centered, lacking systematic training plans and incentive measures. Students cannot fully construct the knowledge they have learned; when facing real corporate environments and business types, they struggle to apply their knowledge to develop corresponding strategies. Many employers complain that graduate students lack practical experience and abilities. The root cause lies in the lack of an integrated and systematic framework in the professional education and teaching practice system, resulting in fragmented practical content, uncontrolled practical processes, and suboptimal practical effects due to the independent implementation of each training course<sup>[4]</sup>.

## **2. Current situation of practical teaching for the marketing training course**

Taking the Marketing Training course as an example, based on teaching evaluation data over the past three years and feedback from teaching supervisors, peer evaluations, students, and enterprises, four key issues in the course were identified<sup>[5]</sup>.

### **2.1. Difficulty in integration**

Practical operations cannot be integrated into the existing knowledge system. During training courses, students often focus solely on the operational skills of training software while neglecting an in-depth understanding of relevant theoretical knowledge. This "operation-focused, theory-neglected" learning model prevents students from truly grasping the internal operating mechanisms of the software, and practical operations without theoretical guidance fail to form a systematic knowledge system.

### **2.2. Difficulty in application**

Theoretical knowledge struggles to guide practical operations. There is a disconnect between the abstract nature of marketing knowledge and the complexity of marketing environments, leading to a poor connection between theory and practice when students apply their knowledge. The lack of effective mechanisms to integrate theoretical knowledge with real market cases in teaching makes it difficult for students to establish an intuitive marketing thinking framework.

### **2.3. Difficulty in expansion**

Learning outcomes lack effective promotion. The limited scope of marketing training results in insufficient competitiveness among students. Current simulation exercises are mostly confined to small-scale competitions within classes, restricting students' horizons and competitive scope<sup>[6]</sup>. In the job market, students face fierce competition from graduates of universities across the country and other social candidates. This limited training model cannot effectively enhance students' competitiveness in the job market<sup>[7]</sup>.

### **2.4. Difficulty in transformation**

The conversion rate of professional knowledge and abilities is low. Students' training operations mainly rely on virtual simulation systems, and there is a gap between training content and the actual needs of enterprises. Additionally, students have few opportunities to practice in enterprises, lacking experience in real work environments and hands-on operation. This gap makes it difficult to convert training effects into practical work abilities, resulting in an insignificant connection between training and practice<sup>[8]</sup>.

To address these four challenges in practical teaching, this course proposes a new practical teaching reform approach combining “learning, practicing, competing, and cultivating”. This approach introduces “corporate employment standards” into practical teaching to stimulate students’ learning enthusiasm, forming a practical teaching reform model of “learning theory, practicing skills, competing for achievements, and cultivating literacy”. It establishes a tripartite practical teaching operation mechanism involving teachers, students, and enterprises <sup>[9]</sup>, helping students improve three core goals, knowledge, abilities, and literacy, and solving a series of issues such as practical teaching organization and management, practical content optimization, and practical transformation and application.

### 3. Reform goals

Based on the training objectives for marketing talents and to address the four key challenges in the training course, reform goals are set in terms of the teaching system, course modules, teaching models, and teaching paths (**Table 1**):

- (1) Construct a Teaching System Integrating Theoretical and Practical Courses  
Integrate the Marketing course and Marketing Training course from separate courses into a unified system. Focus resources from the online Marketing course and the “MOOC Westward” project on marketing training simulations, providing multi-channel and comprehensive support for the Marketing Training course.
- (2) Expand Marketing Training Course Modules  
Align training content with current market trends, develop interactive practice modules, and use virtual reality technology to create immersive marketing scenarios. This allows students to engage in marketing activities in a realistic environment, enhancing their practical abilities and learning effectiveness <sup>[10]</sup>.
- (3) Create a New Teaching Model of “Promoting Training Through Competitions, Integrating Competitions and Training”  
This model breaks the static and single training teaching model by adding competition links, enabling students to strengthen professional skills and enhance professional practical competitiveness through competitions. Its core concept is to stimulate students’ learning motivation through competitions, transforming static knowledge impartment into dynamic ability development, and improving students’ practical abilities, innovative abilities, and teamwork abilities.
- (4) Explore New Paths for Marketing Training Course Reform  
Expand the Marketing Training course and provide marketing practice bases for students, enabling them to better apply professional knowledge to analyze and solve practical problems, enhance professional skills, and build core competitiveness.

**Table 1.** Transformation directions of marketing training course reform

Transformation direction		Description
Study	From “Separation” to “Integration”	Transform from “single courses” to a teaching system combining “theoretical courses and training courses”
Practice	From “Weak” to “Strong”	Transform from “practical training only” to “practical exercises + practical training” to enhance training effects
Competition	From “Static” to “Dynamic”	Transform from “static knowledge impartment” to “dynamic ability development”
Training	From “Virtual” to “Practical”	Transform from “marketing training virtual simulation” to “marketing training virtual simulation + corporate practice”

## **4. Reform ideas**

### **4.1. Addressing the difficulty in integrating theory and practice**

To help students supplement theoretical knowledge during training courses, two measures are adopted:

- (1) Offline Theoretical Course Design: Effectively review key theoretical knowledge in training courses, and respond to the Ministry of Education's "MOOC Westward" initiative by innovatively conducting cross-regional synchronous classroom teaching with universities in eastern China, achieving the sharing and complementary advantages of teaching resources.
- (2) Full Utilization of Online Learning Resources<sup>[11]</sup>: Select online courses such as Marketing on the Smart Tree platform (on-campus resources) and high-quality online courses (off-campus resources), integrating internal and external resources through diversified channels to help students consolidate theoretical foundations.

### **4.2. Addressing the difficulty in applying theoretical knowledge to practice**

To establish a bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical operations and improve training effects:

- (1) Set Up Simulation Practice Sessions<sup>[12]</sup>: Fully consider students' actual needs in teaching preparation, and effectively help students familiarize themselves with operating procedures and task requirements by providing operation manuals, video tutorials, and multiple simulation exercises. This hierarchical teaching design significantly reduces the error rate of students during formal training.
- (2) Enhance the Interest of Teaching Activities: Design in-class knowledge competitions or skill contests to stimulate students' learning motivation through competition mechanisms. Appropriate rewards and public recognition are given to students with proficient operations and outstanding performance. This positive incentive not only encourages advanced students but also motivates underperforming students, helping to create a more positive learning atmosphere<sup>[13]</sup>.

### **4.3. Addressing insufficient student competitiveness due to limited training scope**

To expand the breadth and depth of students' learning, organize marketing simulation competitions:

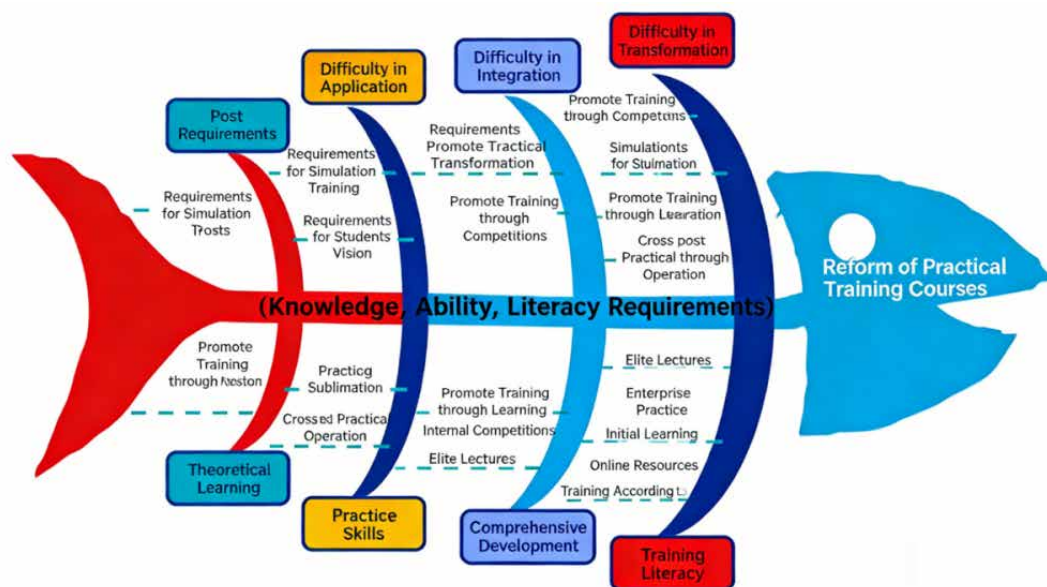
- (1) Increase In-school Competitions: On the basis of in-class marketing simulation competitions, further expand teaching formats by organizing inter-class in-school competitions to promote communication and learning among students from different classes, enhancing their teamwork abilities and competitive awareness.
- (2) Increase Inter-school Competitions: Build on in-school competitions and organize inter-school competitions with counterpart assistance universities in Xinjiang, breaking institutional barriers, strengthening communication and learning between students of the university and those from counterpart assistance universities, and helping students better enhance their market competitiveness<sup>[14]</sup>.

### **4.4. Addressing the gap between training content and corporate needs**

To enable students to engage with enterprises and understand their real operations (**Figure 1**):

- (1) Invite Enterprises to Participate in Teaching: Invite corporate experts to the classroom to share the actual operation status of enterprises and industry talent needs, realizing the integration of theory and practice. Real case teaching not only stimulates students' learning interest but also helps them better understand the real business environment of enterprises, narrowing the gap between software simulation and corporate practice, and increasing the practicality and relevance of teaching content.

- (2) Arrange Student Visits to Enterprises: In the later stage of marketing training simulations, extend the training to off-campus practice bases through mobile classrooms. This teaching model effectively promotes the transformation of theoretical knowledge into practical skills. By moving classrooms to real business environments, abstract concepts are concretely presented, and simulation becomes closer to real scenarios, significantly improving students' practical application abilities<sup>[15]</sup>.

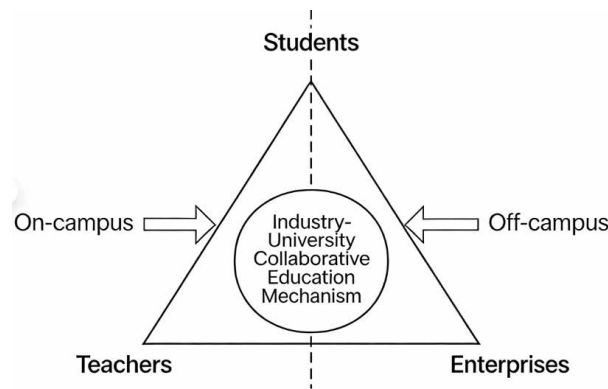


**Figure 1.** Fishbone diagram of marketing training course reform.

## 5. Reform methods

The course reform adheres to the “one core, two formats, three subjects” approach (**Figure 2**):

- (1) **One Core:** Centered on the industry-education collaborative education mechanism, closely integrating industry and education to improve the comprehensive quality and practical abilities of marketing professionals, promote educational reform and development, and cultivate talents who meet the needs of industrial development.
- (2) **Two Formats:** Including in-school training and off-campus practice. In-school training refers to practical teaching activities in a simulated work environment within the university, allowing students to apply their knowledge in a simulated setting to improve their hands-on abilities. Off-campus practice refers to practical teaching in enterprises, enabling students to apply their knowledge to solve marketing problems in real work, enhancing their professional literacy and comprehensive abilities<sup>[16–18]</sup>.
- (3) **Three Subjects:** Promoting close alignment between education and industry through three dimensions—students, enterprises, and teachers. This involves establishing training teaching bases, strengthening university-enterprise cooperation, improving teachers' teaching capabilities, enhancing the core competitiveness of the major, building a multi-dimensional collaborative education system, improving talent training quality, and adapting to social needs<sup>[19,20]</sup>.



**Figure 2.** “One core, two formats, three subjects” implementation approach.

## 6. Specific implementation plan

Based on the problems and reform ideas of marketing training, the training course content is re-planned, with the following specific teaching arrangements (**Table 2**).

**Table 2.** Teaching plan for marketing training course

Content Module	Class Hours	Teaching Plan
Learning Theory	6 hours	“4+2” model: 4 hours of theory review, 2 hours of theoretical knowledge competition
Practicing Skills	16 hours	“4+12” model: 4 hours of simulation exercises, 12 hours of practical operations
Competing for Achievements	12 hours	“2×6” model: 6 rounds of in-school or off-campus competitions, 2 hours per round
Cultivating Literacy	6 hours	“2+2+2” model: 2 hours of corporate expert lectures, 2 hours of enterprise visits, 2 hours of training reports

### 6.1. Stage 1: Learning theory

Marketing training involves knowledge of marketing; mastering marketing theories helps students better understand how enterprises make marketing decisions during training operations. This stage is divided into two steps:

- (1) Step 1: Use 4 hours to review key theoretical knowledge used in marketing training, helping students reinforce their professional knowledge.
- (2) Step 2: Conduct a 2-hour theoretical knowledge competition to help teachers better understand students’ mastery of theoretical knowledge <sup>[21]</sup>.

### 6.2. Stage 2: Practicing skills

Create a competitive and collaborative virtual marketing environment on the marketing training platform, allowing students to play different roles in corporate operations, understand and implement marketing decisions from multiple perspectives. Gaps in marketing strategies are reflected through market share, actual sales volume, profit margin, and total capital, with simulation performance measured by profit. This stage is carried out in two steps:

- (1) Step 1: Use 4 hours for two rounds of simulation exercises to help students familiarize themselves with software operation processes and rules.

- (2) Step 2: Conduct 6 rounds of practical operations over 12 hours, with rankings within the class <sup>[22]</sup>.

### **6.3. Stage 3: Competing for achievements**

Help students gain self-awareness and enhance their competitiveness through course competitions, conducted in two forms:

- (1) In-school competitions between different classes, allowing students to understand their competitive level within the university.
- (2) Inter-school competitions with counterpart assistance universities in Xinjiang, broadening students' horizons and helping them clarify their self-positioning.

### **6.4. Stage 4: Cultivating literacy**

Improve students' literacy from three aspects:

- (1) Invite corporate experts to give in-depth professional lectures.
- (2) Organize off-campus learning visits to enterprises, integrating training simulations with real operations to enhance the conversion between simulation exercises and actual operations.
- (3) Conduct training course reports and summaries, with students sharing experiences and lessons learned <sup>[23]</sup>.

## **7. Conclusion**

In the digital era, new requirements are put forward for practical teaching reform. By constructing a “learning-practicing-competing-cultivating” teaching system, adhering to the industry-education collaborative education mechanism as the core, combining in-school training with off-campus practice, and closely aligning students, enterprises, and teachers, this reform improves students' comprehensive quality and implements the concept of building a powerful education country.

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