

Research on the Teaching Mode of “Cross-border E-commerce” in International Trade Major of Independent College Based on PBL

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Abstract: The Ministry of Education has proposed to accelerate the merger and transformation of independent colleges, and has set new goals for their education and teaching work in cultivating undergraduate applied skilled talents. Independent colleges should take this opportunity to actively promote teaching mode reform. Taking the International Economics and Trade major as an example, in response to the shortcomings of the talent training system and practical teaching, a hybrid teaching model with “cross-border e-commerce” as the characteristic application direction can be proposed. Guided by PBL and students’ application results, the information technology and practical elements of the curriculum can be explored, and information technology methods can be integrated into the implementation of “flipped classroom+project-based teaching” and other information technology integrated teaching and teaching evaluation design models.

Keywords: PBL; Independent college; Cross-border e-commerce

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1. Introduction

Under the background of the strategic development of higher education popularization, independent colleges have developed based on superior disciplines and characteristic majors, which are the same as parent universities in terms of training objectives and specialty settings. However, with the change in the connotation of higher education towards “improving the quality and optimizing the structure as the core,” the “transfer” of independent colleges has become the key task in education reform^[1]. In 2020, the Ministry of Education issued the “Implementation Plan on Accelerating the Establishment of ‘Independent Colleges’,” which makes it clear that the “merger and establishment” of independent colleges should cultivate high-level skills and talents for national and regional economic development^[2]. Therefore, the new goal of the independent college should be to cultivate application-oriented talents, and its “transfer” is to transform into application-oriented or career-oriented undergraduates^[3]. However, as a result of the dependence on parent universities,

most independent colleges do not take the training of applied skills talents as their goal, the proportion of information and practical teaching is too small, their emphasis on theory and light application, poor practical ability of students, difficult to adapt to industry development and enterprise work requirements, unable to achieve the goal of independent colleges to train applied skills talents ^[4].

2. The need for independent colleges to strengthen blended teaching practices

2.1. Economic development has put forward new requirements for the training of applied skills talents for international trade majors in independent colleges

International trade is a veteran major in economics and management, with good employment prospects for students. It is offered in most independent colleges. After re-examining the professional positioning of independent colleges after the “transfer,” it may be common that the teaching mode cannot meet the needs of training high-level applied talents, which is manifested in two aspects.

(1) The teaching mode is traditional, and the teaching application effect is not ideal

In the traditional teacher-lectured mode, there is a lot of knowledge infusion and theoretical analysis, while the talent training after the “transfer” of independent colleges emphasizes connecting with practice, inspiring students, and cultivating application-oriented talents who can solve practical problems in international trade. In terms of teaching methods, more information-based teaching methods should be considered, and practice and application-oriented improvement should be carried out.

(2) The curriculum system is “hard,” and the “soft” curriculum is not developed enough

Most independent colleges tend to copy the teaching plan of parent colleges and fail to design a course system with their characteristics according to the particularity of independent colleges and the characteristics of students. The course system attaches more importance to theory than practice and lacks the development of “soft” courses needed to cultivate students’ comprehensive application ability ^[5]. From course system organization, the teaching scheme design to course credit setting, all need to be modified and improved.

2.2. The cross-border e-commerce industry has a large demand for talent, and the talent training system is not perfect

In recent years, the import and export trade of cross-border e-commerce has maintained a rapid growth trend, and its rapid development has eliminated the transaction barriers existing in the region of enterprises and consumers and has a positive impact on China and the global trade environment. As of the end of 2023, The State Council has approved the establishment of a cross-border e-commerce comprehensive pilot zone in a total of seven batches of cities, a total of 165 cities (regions), covering 31 provinces, cross-border e-commerce talents have become a social urgent need for industry talents. As a new industry in recent years, the future talent gap in China may reach more than 5 million, the bottleneck of cross-border e-commerce development needs to make up for the talent gap, international trade majors have set up cross-border e-commerce-related courses, pay attention to cross-border e-commerce training, but most of the universities are still in the exploration stage, there are many problems. Due to the lack of experience or technology lag, the training system of independent colleges in the direction of cross-border e-commerce talents is still not perfect.

There are some limitations in the curriculum. Most independent colleges pay attention to the cultivation of general-purpose talents and invest less in the cultivation of special talents, which is difficult to adapt to the special needs of talent positions. Only paying attention to the cultivation of general-purpose talents while

ignoring the cultivation of characteristic talents can neither promote the deepening of trade between China and the countries along the Belt and Road, which is becoming increasingly prominent nor meet the needs of local characteristics going abroad.

Besides, due to the imperfect evaluation system, students cannot fully realize their shortcomings in practical operation and practice, which makes it difficult for students to improve their ability to solve practical problems and adapt to changes, and it is difficult to meet the requirements of cross-border e-commerce industry and related enterprises.

3. The construction of mixed teaching mode of international trade major courses in independent colleges

Under the background of “reestablishment,” the international trade major of independent colleges is positioned to cultivate high-level applied talents for the development of national foreign trade and regional trade. Based on the vigorous development of “cross-border e-commerce” and the gap in talent demand in recent years, the curriculum system setting and education and teaching reform in this characteristic direction are particularly urgent. The blended teaching design helps students to establish a solid foundation, master advanced knowledge, broaden their horizons and cultivate the crossfield comprehensive ability, cultivate students’ practical operation and management ability in the field of cross-border e-commerce, and keep up with the development trend of the industry, so that the professional talents have strong competitiveness in the field of cross-border e-commerce.

Problem-based Learning (PBL), which originated from medical education in the 1950s, is an innovative applied teaching model with students as the main body and problems or projects as the core ^[6]. This model focuses on the combination of theory and practical application, interactive participation in the teaching process, and immersion experience, from the perspective of students, through the intelligent “teaching method + teaching steps” of the new teaching model, focusing on students’ active learning ^[7]. Problem-oriented, in the form of group cooperation, gives full play to students’ learning autonomy and cooperation and achieves the purpose of cultivating students’ independent and cooperative learning ^[8]. It can cultivate students’ practical ability and master the teaching knowledge of applied professional courses. PBL concept encourages students to learn independently, emphasizing the effect of students’ learning rather than what the teacher teaches ^[9].

The curriculum hybrid teaching design with the characteristics of “cross-border e-commerce” can learn from the PBL teaching concept, take cross and integration as the main way, and change from discipline orientation to students’ active learning to obtain application results. With curriculum construction as the core, informatization technology as the tool, and classroom revolution as the breakthrough point, the teaching mode reform and practice plan revision are carried out. By actively paying attention to the needs of the country and the industry for professional talents with special characteristics, the teaching method is designed with informatization teaching tools, and talents with excellent application ability of cross-border e-commerce are cultivated.

4. The implementation path of the curriculum hybrid teaching mode in the direction of cross-border e-commerce

Based on the PBL-oriented information integration teaching mode, this teaching mode should have its

application law in the teaching design of international trade majors in independent colleges from the academic perspective, and be applied to the teaching of international trade majors. Evaluating its application effect can effectively improve the training quality of applied talents of international trade majors in independent colleges.

4.1. Curriculum informatization and practical elements mining, PBL-oriented informatization means into the course teaching

Based on the understanding of the needs of the industry and the position setting of enterprises, the course is reversely designed. The traditional classroom focuses on teaching knowledge, and students take notes in class recite theories and do exercises after class. Such a teaching method cannot arouse students' interest in learning. By exploring the information and practical elements of the course, it can be organically integrated into various information teaching methods and contents after optimization, and effectively improve students' learning interest and learning effect^[10]. Given the characteristic direction of "cross-border e-commerce" of international trade majors of independent colleges, the information and practical elements of relevant courses should be effectively explored. For example, for the course "Cross-border E-commerce Practice," an online trade case base and data analysis platform can be established to adjust according to the latest situation of cross-border e-commerce international trade. The virtual simulation laboratory can be set up for students to understand and practice the new operation mode of cross-border e-commerce, and pay attention to the guidance of students' innovative thinking and the cultivation of innovative ability.

4.2. The implementation of information integration teaching models such as "flipped classroom + project-based teaching" guided by students' application results

In the pre-class preparation stage, short videos and supporting materials are recorded and uploaded to the course platform to prompt preview tasks. During the teaching process, questions or cases are set with the goal of cultivating application-oriented talents in international trade needed by the cross-border e-commerce industry, and student's interest in learning is stimulated by problem-oriented teaching methods^[11]. For example, according to the teaching content of each unit, the cross-border e-commerce trade links are divided into corresponding practical projects. Students will discuss and analyze cases in groups and complete relevant reports or situational dialogues. It can also train students' relevant abilities by imitating case roles and discussing strategies in groups. Through diversified and integrated teaching mode reforms such as "flipped classroom and project-based teaching and practical training connection," students are allowed to learn by teaching, learning by doing, so that teaching, learning and doing are integrated into the process of action learning to improve their ability, cultivate students' innovative thinking and entrepreneurial ability.

5. Evaluation design of blended teaching mode in the direction of "cross-border e-commerce"

Under the concept of PBL information integration, students are emphasized as the main body, and students' learning results are emphasized. The assessment design should break the assessment mode of "one examination determines excellent," and reduce the proportion of the final examination by establishing a multi-dimensional assessment system and emphasizing process assessment. Assessment can be reflected by online learning results, classroom performance results and final exam results. According to the core elements of the teaching mode, the paper puts forward the guarantee measures for the effective development of the

PBL information-integrated teaching mode of international trade majors from the aspects of the definition of learning problems, the skill training of team members and the effective conflict management. In the course of teaching and after the end of the questionnaire to collect feedback from students, timely find out the problems in the teaching process, through constant exploration to find out the teaching mode suitable for professional construction ^[12].

At the end of each semester, the teaching and learning design scheme should be optimized according to the mission and goal of international trade talents training of independent colleges, based on the concept of PBL information integration education, and a modular curriculum system implementation theoretical and practical learning course with the teaching mode and method as the main line should be constructed to scientifically evaluate the learning effect of major students ^[13]. The comprehensive assessment system of the curriculum can be established from three aspects.

- (1) Questionnaires should be distributed among students and teachers should be interviewed at the same time to sort out the problems and suggestions related to the teaching quality evaluation index system, design a teaching quality evaluation index system suitable for international trade majors in independent colleges, and quantitatively evaluate the quality of students' practical application ability.
- (2) The objective and subjective indicators of students' evaluation of teaching, the daily performance indicators of students' answers to questions, the evaluation indicators of students' curriculum quality, and the improvement indicators of students' information-based practical operation skills are designed to preliminarily establish the evaluation index system. Establish the index of course quality feedback mechanism to evaluate and promote reform and guide the evaluation of teaching course quality.
- (3) According to the data of the previous stage, the index results were analyzed, the teaching reform design scheme was revised and improved, and the related problems were evaluated and suggestions were put forward.

The rapid development of economic globalization and information technology, as well as the openness of international trade and the multiplicity of learning objectives, have brought great challenges to education and teaching ^[14]. Based on the "re-establishment" background of the independent college and the goal positioning of the international trade major to train high-level applied talents with technical skills for national and regional trade development, universities should try to actively integrate the emerging knowledge science into the curriculum system through diversified modern information technology and multi-language teaching methods, and based on the PBL concept ^[15]. At the same time, according to the social and economic development, it is an urgent practice for the international trade major of the independent college to strengthen the design of information integration into the teaching method, improve students' application ability, highlight the characteristics of serving the local economy and cultivating international trade talents, and cultivate talents with comprehensive quality, scientific spirit and application ability.

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