

# Research on the Application of Self-Directed Learning in Principle of Management Teaching

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## ***Abstract:***

By analyzing the current situations and existing problems of management course teaching in colleges and universities, this paper has proposed the application feasibility of guided autonomous learning in management course teaching in colleges and universities and discussed the possible application paths to fully mobilize students' autonomous learning enthusiasm, so as to improve teaching quality and guide students to grow and become talented people. It also provided a reference for realizing the goal of talent training in colleges and universities in the "era of innovation and entrepreneurship".

**Keywords:** *Self-directed learning, Management teaching, Application.*

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The concept of autonomous learning can be traced back to ancient Greece. "MIDWIFE" theory introduced by Socrates holds that the task of teachers is not only to create and disseminate knowledge but also to be a "midwife of knowledge" to stimulate students' awareness of active exploration and develop their thinking of actively seeking answers to questions. Since the 1960s, self-directed learning has gained global popularity in the fields of pedagogy and psychology. The key for more effectively transfer professional knowledge, skills and culture to students in limited school learning time through teachers' oral and personal instruction is to make students interested in learning itself, directly get involved in teaching, and establish the good habit of continuous autonomous learning and self-education through what is called "lifelong learning". Guided self-directed learning model is an in-depth exploration to fulfill the above purposes.

## **II. DEFINITION OF SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING**

Self-directed learning refers to a learning activity process where learners actively determine their own learning objectives and tasks and carry out conscious planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities based on their own physical and mental development and variations with the support of their teachers and peers considering the educational requirements of school and society [1]. In response to "student-centered" educational concept and practice, in line with the national development strategy of "mass entrepreneurship and innovation", as the base of talent training, colleges and universities need to develop several applied talents to actively find, analyze and solve problems through their knowledge along

with the spirit of innovation and ability of team cooperation. Self-directed learning model echoes the recently-proposed research-oriented teaching model to break the relatively exclusive method of knowledge acquisition in traditional cramming teaching, "teachers first and students second", and stimulate the curiosity and enthusiasm of students for active learning. Through continuous practice and exploration in different fields, relevant knowledge and skills were integrated to create an almost perfect knowledge base as well as comprehensive literacy and ability in students to improve the quality of higher education and teaching, ensure that students always maintain competitive advantages in increasingly severe social competition, and pave the way for personality development and success in students.

### **III. THE CURRENT SITUATION AND PROBLEMS OF MANAGEMENT COURSE TEACHING IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

Management is a basic course offered in colleges and universities for economics and management students. It enables students to understand and master the basic theories and general methods of management, understand management history and the frontier trend of management theory, and develop students' basic management skills in planning, organization, leadership and control. It is a highly operational and practical discipline. In the context of economic globalization, economic development and scientific and technological progress urgently require students to improve their ability to recognize, analyze and solve problems by using management principles and methods. It is becoming increasingly important to develop students' practical and innovation abilities and improve their professional quality. However, management courses in colleges and universities still suffer from some problems such as emphasis on theory over practical teaching which also affects the improvement of professional ability and comprehensive quality of students to a certain extent. In this work, the problems of current management courses have been analyzed in terms of the two aspects of teaching mode of teachers and learning style of students. The specific analysis is as follows,

#### **3.1 There is no Fundamental Change in the Teaching Modes of Teachers**

Although new curriculum reform is advocated, in most colleges and universities, management courses are still dominated by theoretical sessions. Teachers simply present theoretical knowledge in classes in accordance with the requirements of textbooks and syllabus. Students master knowledge through understanding and memorizing and there is a lack of two-way interaction between teachers and students. Teaching process also involves less case discussion as well as arrangement and guidance of practical tasks outside the classroom. Therefore, that students' understanding of the curriculum mostly remains in cognitive stage, but when facing problems in practice, they do not know the ideas and methods of transforming what they have learned from books into practical problem-solving, which is more difficult to achieve the degree of innovation.

Some university teachers of management actively perform teaching reform and "student-centered" teaching. However, two extremes can occur: First is delivering only theoretical contents to students, where there is no perfect control system which results in strong frustration and low learning efficiency. Second is

curriculums with no overall planning which does not distinguish between teacher-led and student-led contents from the perspective of the whole curriculum system, resulting in scattered and disordered curriculum which cannot guide students to master the relevant theories and applications of management and effectively achieve the objectives of the curriculum.

Therefore, although various teaching modes have been tested and modified for the reform of management curriculum, they have not fundamentally activated students' learning enthusiasm and the effect of reform is not high.

### 3.2 Students' Learning Style is Relatively Passive

According to a recent survey on the learning management of students [2], some students think they only passively listen and have no sense of classroom participation, resulting in low efficiency of learning.

In this case, first, there is no clear purpose of learning. Students do not know why they study management courses and think that learning these courses is not helpful in improving their ability. At the same time, some students have admitted that they did not clearly understand the relationships among management and other courses in the follow-up professional courses. Lack of scientificity in evaluating learning results as well as process assessment in traditional curriculum system and significant final ratio push the students to pay too much attention to final examination results and ignoring improving their knowledge application ability.

Second, the course contents are boring and learning experience is poor. Main management contents rely on the development history of western developed countries and theoretical knowledge is also taken from research results obtained through the strategic management models of developed countries. Cases are refined from the typical management experiences of developed countries, which leads to the lack of local management characteristics. At the same time, traditional management learning depends on teachers' teaching, which lacks curriculum practice and suffer from poor classroom experience.

## **IV. FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING ORIENTED AUTONOMOUS LEARNING IN MANAGEMENT TEACHING**

### 4.1 From the Perspective of the Function of Guided Autonomous Learning

Improving the autonomous learning ability of college students is the key to improve college education quality, enhance the interest of students in learning, improve their knowledge structure, promote their personality development and develop creative talents for new era. Guided autonomous learning is realized in certain creative situations enabling students to achieve learning tasks and objectives, give full play to their subjective initiative, and generate motivation for active exploration and self-education under the guidance of their teachers. This can help students master the systematicness and coherence of knowledge, integrate theory with practice, and promote the transformation, consolidation, improvement and innovation

of knowledge and experience. Also, this results in the development of the spirit of unremitting struggle and potential to adapt to constant change.

#### 4.2 From the Perspective of the Characteristics and Training Objectives of Management Course

In college management course itself, the cultivation of students' practical ability is considered and doing so relying solely on the traditional theoretical teaching method is far from reflecting the training goal of this course. This course must be able to stimulate students to perform practical explorations and transfer knowledge and experience, which coincides with the purpose and process of guided autonomous learning. In oriented autonomous learning mode, teachers take over the roles of guidance, inspiration, and puzzle solving. The purpose is to reform the traditional mode of management curriculum and develop applied talents and lifelong learners with high quality and innovative ability. Curriculum reform as well as the transformation of teaching ideas and methods are also very helpful in improving the professional quality and ability of teachers.

### **V. APPLICATION PATH OF SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING IN UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT COURSES**

#### 5.1 Project-Based Teaching

Project-based teaching is a teaching model which organically combines theoretical knowledge and practical situations. This method constructs a curriculum system by completing projects, organizes teaching processes, and focuses on training the practical operation skills and innovative entrepreneurship in students.

Unlike traditional mode of teaching contents based on teaching materials, in order to investigate the employment needs of enterprises and considering to the requirements of the national code of occupational classification for talents in different positions, we clarified the training objectives of management majors, the curriculum objectives support the realization of professional training objectives, and the task objectives of curriculum modules support the realization of curriculum objectives. Corresponding to the objectives of each level, and finally realize the curriculum objectives through the learning of the curriculum module, and finally complete the training of applied talents.

Therefore, we disassembled the knowledge points of management, reconstructed them according to the requirements of curriculum objectives, and formed a three-level matrix supported by objectives. First level matrix defines the positioning of management in the whole talent training program from professional training perspective. It defines management support for training objectives in terms of knowledge, ability and quality. To address the problems of traditional teaching mode such as poor classroom teaching effect, we tried to establish a teacher-led, student-centered interactive teaching + autonomous learning mode. Secondary matrix, also known as curriculum matrix, defines the support of each module to curriculum teaching objectives. Three-level matrix, also known as module matrix, describes the support of each

module lesson point to task goal. Finally, each teaching content is refined through the syllabus to support three-level matrix and the realization of various goals. Therefore, in management course content design, it improves the high-level and challenge of management course.

## 5.2 Implementation of Research Oriented Teaching Mode

Under the concept of "student-centered teaching", Implement the research-oriented teaching mode [3], arrange tasks before class, prepare students before class, create problem situations, case analysis, brainstorming, etc. in class, inspire students to think about ways to solve problems, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of solutions and related knowledge and technology transfer after class, and finally guide the application in real life to improve students' flexible adaptability.

## 5.3 Combination of Multi-Mode Course Types

Today, every department of any enterprise can be regarded as a complete team. Therefore, the completion of work tasks depends not only on individuals, but also on the force formed by the team. Many enterprises take good teamwork spirit as an important entry index when recruiting. In the classroom, group discussion mode can be employed to strengthen communication and interaction as well as the collision of thinking among students, so that they can learn how to get along and cooperate with team members, deal with relationships among members, and fulfill the assigned tasks in groups to enhance the collective sense of honor and establish the awareness of cooperation and competition among students.

Based on group learning along with a variety of teaching forms such as classroom teaching, group discussion, field research, report display, individual guidance, etc., give full play to students' learning initiative and improve learning efficiency. In the practical teaching of management course, teachers first arrange the teaching of structured knowledge to lay the foundation of theoretical knowledge in students. This part is teacher-centered. Then, students are divided into groups, project tasks are assigned, and students are allowed to visit and investigate enterprises according to the requirements of the project tasks. To complete the task, the group has to hold brainstorming discussions, put forward their own "questions", take action with questions, apply relevant theories in real enterprise cases and verify the learned knowledge. Finally, team members have to exchange and report on the completion of project tasks. Through multi-mode combinatorial teaching form, the learning interests of students are improved and their autonomous learning ability is gradually developed.

## 5.4 Combination with Enterprise Practice Research

After determining teaching objectives, student teams choose their projects by themselves. If possible, school enterprise cooperation mode is taken, students are allowed to participate in real project planning, marketing and implementation processes, actively collect the data required by the project, undertake corresponding works according to labor division, and finally evaluate the completion of project according to the project requirements and evaluation standards, which actually enriches the work experience of

students. This method develops the creativity, will quality and achievement motivation of students.

In real management courses, based on the design of enterprise practice project-driven teaching method, multiple phased project tasks are set for the whole management course and students are allowed to take real enterprises as main research object, and many different industries such as Tsingtao beer, KFC, McDonald's, Shandong Dazhi Education Group Co.,ltd, Qingdao Wolong Food Co., Ltd and SISOUL Group are selected. For well-known enterprises with different business modes, students can independently choose and complete research and project tasks on the spot. Students gradually learn to use relevant knowledge and theories flexibly to solve problems through enterprise practice projects.

At the same time, through team cooperation, students independently contact different enterprises and conduct field research to develop their abilities in active learning, team cooperation, communication and negotiation. Students can creatively solve the specific problems of enterprises to improve their ability to recognize, analyze and solve problems by using management principles and methods. Through communication and contact with research enterprise staff, students exercise independent personality and sense of equality. According to the results obtained from research and interviews, specific project tasks are completed and critical thinking of students are exercised. The whole course has greatly activated the enthusiasm of students for active learning and laid a foundation for the development of autonomous learning ability.

### 5.5 Linked Curriculum Assessment System

The key to the success of management curriculum reform lies in whether the assessment method is scientific. Management course assessment method comprehensively considers the process and result assessments. Process assessment is mainly set up in the form of test, classroom display, classroom participation and other assessment forms. According to the progress of course content, a small test is taken to evaluate the theoretical knowledge of students. The answers are relatively fixed. It mainly helps students review the theoretical knowledge learned for seven times; Classroom participation is mainly quantified according to the constructive contributions of students and their answers to questions in the classroom. Class presentation allows students to share and report the completion of project tasks after finishing research. Totally, three presentations are performed in the class. For test evaluation, the standard answer is set online. The evaluation of classroom performance mainly relies on the number of times students answer questions and contribute useful ideas in discussions. Evaluation of students' presentation link is completed by teacher team and team member representatives as professional scoring scale.

At the same time, for evaluation, 3D and multi-dimensional evaluation methods are adopted to create a four-in-one diversified evaluation system with the participation of teachers, students, enterprise experts, and college level teaching committee to strive for the scientificity of evaluation. At the same time, online courses are established to ensure real-time communication between students and teachers through superstar learning and students can also get real-time feedback on their performance through the platform.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In short, it was shown that the integration of student-oriented autonomous learning into management curriculum was completely feasible, which was in line with the objectives of new curriculum reform. Colleges, universities and teachers need to update their concepts, clarify the value of guiding students' autonomous learning and self-education, and strive to create a teaching environment and combine a variety of teaching schemes, improve students' correct understanding and participation in marketing courses, and contribute to the development of applied talents to meet the needs of the society.

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