A Research on the Design and Teaching Methods of the Project Oriented Teaching Mode for Artistic Design Major in Independent Colleges

Chun-Qing ZHANG

Longqiao College, Lanzhou, Gansu, China
491267153@qq.com

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Abstract. In recent years China has witnessed a booming development of higher vocational education for the fact that it emphasizes the mode of teaching which is characterized by improving students’ vocational skills as well as fostering high-quality technical and applied talents. For the special nature of artistic design major, its curriculum provision for undergraduate courses strongly reflects its characteristic of practicality, especially in professional and technology-based independent colleges. The construction of project oriented teaching could promote the practical significance of the integration of teaching, and consequently enable students to acquire expertise, to perceive requirements of the business under the impact of social development and to adapt to working atmosphere as well as break through the main bottleneck in finding a job. Meanwhile, the highlight of the construction of practical ability is extremely beneficial in shaping students’ professional confidence and improving their professional quality in the mode of situational teaching.

Introduction

The project oriented teaching mode, which follows the implementation of a project as its principal line, is a teaching method which is mainly carried out by merging together theoretical and practical knowledge so as to implement and accomplish a project by using join forces of both teachers and students. It aims at combining organically theory and practical teaching and fully exploring students’ potential creativity and then enhancing their comprehensive abilities of solving practical problems. The project oriented teaching mode, which highlights the construction of students’ vocational ability for the purpose of promoting students’ occupational skills, uses school-enterprise cooperation projects, academic competitions and lateral researches as its carrier. By means of practical teaching design, students would be able to have a good command of theoretical knowledge and professional skills required so as to upgrade their professional quality. In this way, the traditional problem of the separation of theory and practice or knowledge and skill could be solved effectively.

Compared with traditional pedagogies, the project oriented teaching mode which is based on constructivism is quite distinctive in three aspects. First of all, it changes the traditional teacher-centered mode into the student-centered mode. Secondly, it focuses on the project instead of the textbook. Last but not the least, it emphasizes practical experience but not classroom learning. Consequently, a student is the cognitive subject and the active constructor of knowledge in teaching activities.

Design of the Project Oriented Teaching Mode

Teaching design is the blueprint of the implementation of a course. Design and teaching process of the project oriented teaching mode should use projects as its carrier and embody completely features of student-centered and practice-dominated philosophy. Through strict and scientific teaching plan, blindness in teaching that occurs sometimes would be avoided so as to ensure the preciseness and normalization in teaching, and conversely, effective implementation and evaluation could perfect the teaching design and at the same time optimize the teaching process. They supplement each other. Therefore, not a single one can be omitted.
**Situation Setting.** Creating a scene that is close to reality in the process of teaching and learning, that is, provide students with the circumstance in which they can solve a problem by using the knowledge they have learned.

**Operational Demonstration.** Teachers choose, according to the knowledge points under discussion, a suitable sized project and demonstrate the process of carrying out the project in answer to students’ needs for knowledge transfer.

**Independent Exploration.** Allowing students to think independently so as to understand knowledge points and digest the gist of the demonstrated project and finally lay a sound foundation for their study.

**Project Identification.** A project is confirmed with the help of the tutor through social investigations and group discussions.

**Cooperative Learning.** Group members share out the work and cooperate with one another to accomplish the project design through exchanges and discussions.

**Learning Evaluation.** Learning effectiveness should be measured directly by the completion status of the engineering project, which includes three parts, that is, teacher evaluation, group assessment and self-evaluation. In the process of carrying out a project oriented teaching design, we should focus our teaching activity on the project itself and make sure that the teaching plan is set out on the principle that students are the center of whole classroom activities. The core of classroom teaching is not the textbook any more. It is the project itself which is a high extraction and extreme expansion of the content of a textbook. And learning style is changing from the traditional way of teaching and learning to a mode which emphasizes individual expression or group discussion and the coordination and distribution of responsibilities within a group so that students could accomplish the project together. As for teachers, they should act as consultants who are responsible to help students think about and deal with problems from different angles so as to make sure that students could give full scope to creativity. Achievement transformation is a very important part in the chain of a project oriented teaching design. Therefore, it is vitally important to stimulate students’ creativity and enthusiasm. Tutors provide students with opportunities and ensure the transformation and implementation of achievements. They also play a very important role in the afterwards evaluation and development of the teaching design. For active evaluation of a project oriented teaching design will definitely become an endogenous impetus in the process of teaching. Apart from that, how to solve the problem of matching working-time cycle with teaching-time cycle is a difficult issue that a project oriented teaching design needs to solve.

**Reflection on a Project oriented Teaching Mode**

We should establish and make innovations in designing a project oriented practical teaching mode in hope of improving students’ vocational skills. Therefore, we are urged to undertake constant researches, perfect personnel cultivating program and adjust contents of theory and practical teaching curriculum, so as to improve the quality of education. And during this course, it seems even more urgent to abandon the traditional teaching mode which lacks both diversity and practicality.

**The Construction of Japanese Modular Unitization System for the Purpose of Refining Curriculum Provision Which Aims at Improving Students’ Vocational Ability.** According to the requirements of talent cultivation, curriculum provision should meet the need of requirements of the job market. Explicit requirements on vocational skills that are connected with successional or independent unit courses should be given and at the same time the GPA of the course should be formulated. And finally, teachers should establish the framework for enhancing professional ability through modular unitization system. In the actual implementation of a project oriented teaching mode, the system of specialized courses and the practical training project for the graduates should be established, so as to divide the courses into single modular unit for the purpose of solving specific problems instead of abstract problems. Finally, we should adjust and modify training programs as well as contents of courses on vocational ability training for artistic design majors and formulate practical curriculum in accordance with business requirements to strengthen its utility and effectiveness.
The Establishment of Apprenticeship Teaching Mode in Independent Colleges on the Strength of Bauhaus’ Double-tutor System. Bauhaus’ double-tutor system is the root of German Duales Ausbildungs system. The core of this teaching mode is to create a teaching environment which is a combination of both art and skill. By adopting an apprenticeship teaching mode, teachers are divided into tutors and masters. Teachers who teach freshmen basic theoretical courses play the function of tutors. They are responsible for developing students’ basic ability in tool using. They are responsible for providing students with basic knowledge on professional skills. They also have to give students routine drill to develop their design capability and provide diversified exercises to help students develop their creative thinking and the ability to compose a picture and so forth. Teachers who teach professional core courses are called masters. They help students to acquire the ability to change their design into products. Which is a process that includes the understanding of the material used, the structure concerned, the craft applied as well as the management ability involved. Masters who are responsible for professional core courses divide the course into several integrated project and it is their task to help students to put theory they’ve learned into practice so as to push forward the implementation of project-based teaching. Double-tutor system can be applied to different parts of education both inside and outside universities. Teachers inside universities are defined as tutors whose work is to provide students with knowledge necessary in classroom learning. Teachers outside universities are defined as masters whose work is to guide students to complete internships so as to cultivate students’ professional quality and vocational skills. This way, specific requirements in different posts that double-tutor system possesses can be seen clearly.

In April 2011, the Fourth International Modern Apprenticeship Innovation Research and the Seventh International Conference of Asian Academic Society for Vocational Education and Training was held in Beijing. The director of vocational and adult education department of the State Education Ministry, Wang Jiping, emphasized the importance of establishing modern apprenticeship system under the consideration of China’s national situation. The teaching mode apprenticeship system should be closely integrated with the productive practice courses. Students hold explicit learning goals while they receive the guidance from their masters in replacement internship. And after this productive practice training, students will be able to incorporate themselves right away into practical work. During this process, the construction of practice base and the reservation of teachers are crucial. Considering the requirements current society holds for talent cultivation, conference held in Britain called for Modern Apprenticeship System and conference held in Australia advocated New Apprenticeship system.

In year 2011, State Labor Bureau issued a document, Suggestions on Enhancing and Improving Apprenticeship Training. It is emphasized that within a given period, apprenticeship training would still be an important way of cultivating new technical workers considering the situation of our country.

The Construction of a Training Base Depending on Advantages of School-enterprise Joint Operations. William Morris once said: “One can get well education from a university; he can get it from any other place.” In terms of vocational and technical education, the most effective way of improving the quality of scientific research and talent cultivation is the cooperation and a thorough participation of both the school and the enterprise. A project oriented teaching mode, which is driven by tasks and projects connected with a real post in an enterprise, can be used to enable teachers to have a better command of industry trends in a real enterprise environment in no time, enhance personal qualities in order to adapt to the requirement of practical teaching. Therefore, the creation of a teaching environment which has a real production function will bring lots of benefits to students. On the one hand, posts fit in with students’ vocational training or specialty could be found in an enterprise. On the other hand, the introduction of an enterprise into teaching activities can solve the problem of supply-demand time difference that students may meet with after graduation. And it also lays a sound foundation for further development in students’ integrated quality and at the same time guarantees the effectiveness of a project oriented teaching. Taking the advantage of this practical training, some students could use their design project in the enterprise as their graduation project, and successfully realize the connection of graduation project with market demand.
An Integrated Teaching Mode in Combination of Production, Teaching and Research.

Teachers are young in average age is a realistic problem that most independent colleges are facing. Due to the fact that most of the teachers in independent colleges start their professional career directly after their graduation, they fail to have an experience of training and discipline. Cultivation of a teacher’s ability is a long and complex process, which cannot be treated in a hurry, nor can it be replaced. Therefore, it is easy to understand the problem of disjunction that exists in the process of major course teaching, scientific research and practical accomplishment of a project.

For lack of working experience in an enterprise, it is difficult for a teacher to have a good control of a class which aims at improving students’ knowledge and capability in artistic designing. In contrast, introducing enterprise staff from an enterprise will bring life and energy into real classroom teaching for they bring together with them up to date information of social needs and are good at conducting a project in virtual reality. And at the same time, they can help teachers to get benefits from both project oriented teaching and their scientific researches so as to realize a multi-win presupposition.

What’s more? The guidance from enterprise staff may help our teachers narrow the gap between our inexperience and the real need of society so as to integrate tightly three factors of production, learning and researching.

The Epilogue

The effective implementation of the project oriented teaching design depends on a teacher’s consciousness. Traditional teachers lacked working experience in an enterprise as a result of the limitation in the aspects of their working environment and major, or as a result of the fact that they were divorced from practice owing to teaching at a school for too long and knowing nothing about the market requirement. Consequently, for them project oriented teaching mode remains to be an armchair strategy. Solutions are listed as the following. First of all, the practice system of modular unit which aims at improving students’ vocational ability should be designed in detail. Secondly, a double-tutor and apprenticeship training mode should be established. Apart from that, a school-enterprise joint operational practice base should be set up. Finally, reflection on forming the combination of production, teaching and research should be put forward. During this process, students unify basic knowledge they’ve learned and the practical skills they’ve acquired. And they are also able to combine consciousness of innovation with requirement of society, the connotation of industry with qualifications of a job and consequently, get a promotion in occupational skills. On the other hand, taking the advantage of being able to work in an enterprise, teachers are capable of improving their teaching competence which is energetic to their personal growth and development.

Therefore, a teaching mode which benefits teachers as well as students is really essential to talent cultivation in an independent college.

References