

Exploration on Teaching Reform of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law”: Based on the Practice in Jiaxing University

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Keywords: Environmental and Resource Protection Law, Teaching Perspective, Teaching Design, Teaching Methods , Teaching Assessment

Abstract: “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” is one of the core courses of law major in China. The traditional teaching mode of the course “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” offered by colleges and universities in China has some common deficiencies, such as backward teaching perspective, solidified teaching design, conservative teaching methods, and rigid teaching assessment, etc. Based on the practice in Jiaxing university, some suggestions are summarized for the principles and measures of teaching reform of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” in China. Teaching reform of the course should follow the principles of paying equal attention to theory and practice, reality and foresight, universality and uniqueness. The specific reform measures include realizing the five changes of teaching concepts, paying attention to the four key links of teaching design, exploring problem-based teaching methods, and flexibly adjusting the assessment methods.

1. Introduction

Environmental and Resource Protection Law is a new legal department in China. Due to the short time of its emergence, and the complexity of environmental laws and regulations, the theoretical research on environmental and resource protection law is still at a relatively basic stage. As a result, the traditional teaching mode of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” faces many problems. At present, environmental protection and ecological civilization construction have become the core issues of China’s national governance. Adapting to the new situation, improving the teaching effect of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” and training more qualified talents with good knowledge of environmental and resource protection law are the requirements of the times for teachers.

Under this background, the course of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” offered by Jiaxing university has started the practical exploration of teaching reform. This article is a phased summary of this practical exploration.

2. Problems of Traditional Teaching Mode of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” in China

The author began to teach “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” in Jiaxing University in 2007. After more than ten years of teaching experience, the author summarized the common problems in the teaching of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” in China.

First, the teaching perspective is relatively backward. The traditional teaching perspective of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” is mainly embodied in teachers as the main body, teaching materials as the center, classroom teaching as the leading, knowledge teaching as the direction, and students’ learning as the goal. Of course, this is also the traditional mode of legal teaching in our country. China belongs to the Civil Law and pays attention to the abstract, structural and systematic nature of the law. Therefore, teachers must first give systematic instruction based on designated teaching materials, so as to enable students to form an integrated knowledge framework for the overall framework and basic contents of the law. However, the law of environment and resource protection is a comprehensive, developmental, practical and applied discipline, and the traditional teaching perspective, which is dominated by knowledge transfer, can no longer meet its teaching requirements.

Second, the teaching design is relatively solid. The curriculum design of the traditional teaching of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” is generally to select a textbook, draw up the corresponding syllabus according to the arrangement sequence of the textbook, and then carry out step-by-step classroom teaching according to the design of the syllabus [1]. In terms of teaching content, there are also many teachers who join in case discussions and go out to investigate, but the overall trend is still fixed.

Third, the teaching method is relatively conservative. At present, the teaching of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” is still at the stage of mainly teaching by teachers, and the teaching method is rather outdated. Environmental and resource protection law is a comprehensive cross-discipline, involving a large number of natural sciences such as pollution control, environmental standards and technical specifications, as well as social sciences such as economics and sociology, showing a high degree of specialization. Therefore, the understanding and application of environmental and resource protection law cannot be realized by relying solely on classroom teaching and theory teaching, and it is easy to produce negative effects of cramming.

Fourth, the assessment method is relatively rigid. Although “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” has been identified as one of the 16 core courses of law by the Ministry of Education of China, the course in most colleges and universities, including Jiaxing University, are still classified as optional courses. The course assessment method is usually a split-phase combination of ordinary assessment and final assessment. Ordinary assessment pays attention to the class rate and class participation. Final assessment usually takes the form of open-book examination or writing papers. This kind of course assessment method is a general rule for optional legal courses, but it is becoming more and more rigid. It cannot fit the discipline characteristics of environmental and resource protection law, and the examination of teaching effect is superficial [2].

3. Principles to Be Followed in the Teaching Reform of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law”

The author started the exploration of teaching reform of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” in Jiaxing University in 2014. Based on the gradual pilot practice, the author believes that the teaching reform of the “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” should follow the following principles.

The first is to pay equal attention to theory and practice. The law of environment and resource protection is an interdisciplinary subject, involving numerous theoretical knowledge. It includes not only law, economics, sociology and political science in the field of social science, but also ecology, environmental science and environmental engineering in the field of natural science. At the same time, the law of environment and resource protection is a very practical discipline [3]. The purpose of the teaching of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” is to serve the needs of environmental protection practice. This means that in the teaching of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law”, attention must be paid not only to the teaching of theoretical knowledge, but also to the training of practical ability, both of which cannot be neglected.

The second is to give consideration to reality and foresight. Environmental and resource protection law is a new discipline, and the actual demand is more urgent, the update frequency of knowledge at the theoretical and practical levels is relatively fast. This poses a challenge to the teaching of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law”. On the one hand, the teaching of the “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” should be based on the practical needs of the construction and development of China’s environmental legal system, and it should provide basic theoretical knowledge and legal practice related to environmental and resource protection law for students. On the other hand, the teaching of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” should also reflect the latest trend of theoretical and practical development in the field of environmental and resource protection law.

The third is the combination of universality and uniqueness. The teaching content of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” should fully cover the basic theories, basic systems and basic methods of environmental and resource protection law, so as to ensure that students receive systematic environmental and resource protection law education. At the same time, in the teaching of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law”, it is necessary to adjust measures to local conditions and aim at specific targets. Different teaching institutions, different teachers and different teaching objects will have different emphases on the teaching and learning of environmental and resource protection law.

4. The Specific Teaching Reform Measures of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law”

In the practice of teaching reform of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” in Jiaying University, the author has made corresponding exploration mainly from the following aspects.

The first is the renewal of teaching perspectives. Starting from the characteristics of the course “Environmental and Resource Protection Law”, we believe that the teaching perspectives of the course “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” should strive to realize five changes, from the focus on teaching by teachers to the joint discussion between teachers and students, from the focus on teaching materials to the focus on both teaching materials and extracurricular materials, from the focus on classroom to the combination of classroom and extracurricular materials, from the focus on imparting knowledge to the balance between imparting knowledge and cultivating ability, from the focus on learning to the focus on learning [4].

The second is the adjustment of curriculum design. According to the teaching perspectives of joint discussion between teachers and students, the curriculum design of “Environmental and Resource Protection Law” is divided into four key links [5]: first, creating problem situations, reflecting the corresponding contents of each teaching unit into specific problems, thus stimulating students’ interest in learning; second, guiding students to consult data, sort out and summarize, encouraging students to form their own understanding according to their own knowledge structure, and inducing students to think sparks; third, guiding students to argue with each other and form a

deeper understanding of what they have learned on this basis; finally, through expanded discussion, the knowledge learned can be applied to more practical examples to cultivate students' comprehensive application ability.

The third is the improvement of teaching methods. As mentioned above, the traditional teaching method based on teacher's instruction is no longer suitable for the teaching of "Environmental and Resource Protection Law", and should be changed into a teaching method in which teachers and students discuss together. This teaching method allows students to solve authentic environmental legal problems by setting the learning content into the corresponding problem background, thus forming the skills to solve practical environmental legal problems and the ability to learn independently [6]. This teaching mode can be fully reflected in case teaching. For example, take the Changzhou Poison Land Pollution Case, which is concerned by the current society, as an example. First, let the students check the relevant information of the case by themselves, and then arrange the corresponding questions: How did the pollution come into being? What legal responsibilities should the polluter bear? How should pollution victims claim compensation? What should the government do? Are there any deficiencies in relevant environmental laws and regulations and how should they be improved? These questions are discussed by students in groups and put forward their own solutions, and then the discussion is organized in class.

The fourth is the improvement of assessment methods. In order to fully reflect the teaching effect of "Environmental and Resource Protection Law" and to promote students' enthusiasm and initiative in learning, the current course assessment method should be further improved. The traditional assessment method matches the traditional teaching method of "teachers speak and students listen" [7]. However, under the new teaching method of "teachers guide and students are the main body", students' learning performance is mainly reflected in the usual discussion. Therefore, it should be changed from the final assessment to the usual assessment, from the assessment of memorization and understanding ability to the assessment of application ability, and from the assessment of classroom performance to both in-class and out-of-class performance.

5. Conclusion

"Environmental and Resource Protection Law" is a discipline with outstanding theoretical and practical characteristics. It is also a cross-disciplinary comprehensive discipline of natural science and social science. At the same time, it is also a new legal department with short history and weak foundation. These characteristics determine that the teaching of "Environmental and Resource Protection Law" faces more complex and arduous challenges than other law disciplines. Only when teachers of "Environmental and Resource Protection Law" keep pace with the times, adjust measures to local conditions, update teaching perspectives, create teaching characteristics, and continuously explore and improve teaching ideas and methods can they adapt to the new training requirements of "Environmental and Resource Protection Law" under the new situation.

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