

Analysis on the Reform of Social Work Curriculum Assessment Based on the Construction of New Liberal Arts—Taking the Course "Human Behavior and Social Environment" as an Example

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Abstract: Course evaluation reform is a method and means to determine whether teaching objectives can be achieved in the context of the new liberal arts construction. The process evaluation oriented method is highly consistent with the characteristics and goals of social work. How to break the limitations of traditional exam papers and explore the diverse potential and advantages of students majoring in social work through other means is worth exploring and trying.

1. Introduction

Since the Ministry of Education proposed the construction of "New Engineering, New Medical, New Agriculture, and New Liberal Arts" in 2018 (hereinafter referred to as the "Four New" construction), social work, as one of the new liberal arts majors, has actively explored curriculum construction methods and approaches aimed at cultivating future social work talents, enhancing students' hands-on application ability and interdisciplinary knowledge integration ability. The construction team of the course *Human Behavior and Social Environment* attempted to break away from the conventional teaching reform and summarize the preliminary results achieved so far.

2. Common Problems in Teaching the Course *Human Behavior and Social Environment*

2.1. Course Background and Status

The course *Human Behavior and Social Environment* originated in the United States in the 1960s; It was not until the 1990s that the classroom in Chinese mainland universities entered. The development history is not long, and the development is relatively rapid but not yet mature. It is necessary to actively explore suitable teaching content and methods. This course focuses on the relationship between human behavior and the social environment, as well as their relationship. The main content is the changes in behavior and environment caused by the interaction between them. It elaborates and analyzes the effects of environmental changes on human behavior at different stages, including physiological, psychological, social, and other aspects. The course structure mainly includes three modules: introduction, theoretical foundation, and human life development

cycle.

2.2. Problems in Course Teaching

Firstly, the theory is relatively abstract and there is some difficulty in learning it. This course usually starts in the first semester of freshman year or the first semester of sophomore year, and is a professional course that students have come into contact with earlier. Students have just transitioned from concrete knowledge to abstract knowledge, and their thinking patterns still need some time to adapt, while the first half of the course requires exposure to a large amount of concepts, assumptions, and other content. [1]

Secondly, the combination of classroom knowledge and internship practice is insufficient. This course was offered earlier, and students are still at the peak of absorbing a large amount of professional knowledge, so there are not many opportunities to engage in internship practice. Simply teaching knowledge through teachers in the classroom can easily stay at the stage of mere talk and cannot form a profound experience. Although case sharing is also used to deepen knowledge understanding, students often stay away from specific experiential situations and find it difficult to rise to the level of fully empathizing with the problem, which leads to insufficient ability to apply and reflect on knowledge.

Thirdly, it is limited to the traditional form of closed book exams and lacks process evaluation. This course plays a fundamental role in the entire social work curriculum system, so closed book exams are often chosen. The exam content mainly includes the application of basic concepts, theories, and some simple decisions and methods. The basic concepts and theories do not rule out the important significance of memorization, but the use of paper exams alone for decision-making and methods that require careful consideration is relatively hasty, and cannot fully demonstrate students' multifaceted abilities.

3. Specific Measures for Curriculum Assessment Reform

3.1. To Clarify Assessment Tasks, and to Achieve Course Objectives

At the beginning of the course, it is necessary to clarify the course structure framework and integrate the course knowledge points into the assessment tasks of each design. The overall task of the course *Human Behavior and Social Environment* is divided into two major parts, which are *Biographical Analysis of Characters* and *Research on Life Development Cycles*, which is also in line with the course structure mentioned earlier. At the same time as the "theoretical foundation", students can read biographies of historical figures (including readme, and others' narration, etc.) and use the theories they have learned to analyze their life development process. In addition, students should be encouraged to read classic original works, write theoretical study reports, and communicate and share ideas with each other in small groups, forming a collision of ideas. By arranging such tasks, students can enhance their theoretical knowledge reserves and cognitive depth, while also cultivating their theoretical analysis ability, gradually achieving the teaching goal of combining theory with practice. In the "Life Development Cycle Research" section, students are asked to choose one of the eight life stages in a group form for in-depth exploration, including using videos to showcase the focus and crisis of the stages, and conducting systematic research on specific problems, encouraging students to solve problems from the perspective of social work. This form of integration of emotions and scenes continuously exercises students' observation ability, and also prompts them to reflect on their cognitive biases, enabling them to understand the diversity and uniqueness of social work service objects in advance, and experience the values of social work. This is more in line with students' cognitive logic compared to the previous form where teachers

first give theoretical lectures and then conduct exams.

3.2. To Clarify Assessment Standards, and to Stimulate Learning Motivation

Assessment standards are important guidelines for students to complete assessment tasks, but there may be discrepancies with task requirements during the actual completion process. Taking *Life Development Cycle Research* as an example, students need to complete at least two tasks: video shooting and focus problem research. Video shooting should not only highlight the typical characteristics of the selected life stage in just 15-20 minutes, but also improve the quality of video production. The research on focus issues needs to be conducted from multiple perspectives such as problem generation, performance, causes, and solutions, and the PPT also needs to be formed to share and communicate with the whole class. During the process of completing homework, teachers should always answer questions, supervise the process, and evaluate the results. However, students may have some misunderstandings about the task format, deadline, and other aspects. The course team updates the task standards every year based on students' submission of assignments, in order to clarify the standard requirements more clearly. Different tasks will be presented with different standards. Video tasks are explained in detail at the beginning of the course and need to be completed strictly according to the timeline, while text tasks allow for opportunities for modification, improvement, and submission to stimulate students' learning enthusiasm and motivation.

3.3. To Enrich Assessment Forms, and to Identify Teaching Gaps and Omissions

In addition to the two major tasks of "biographical analysis" and "life cycle research", the assessment forms of this course also include attendance, classroom participation, group discussions, press releases, promotional poster design, and other forms. Although attendance rate does not necessarily represent a true achievement in school, the key is to guide students to pay attention to the classroom, develop good learning habits, and form a good academic atmosphere. [2] At the same time, teachers ask questions to students in class and students ask questions to teachers at any time, forming instant discussions, and keeping records of various items as one of the reference basis for the course score structure. Of course, as a basic course in the field of social work, the mastery of theoretical knowledge and the application of skills cannot be ignored. Pre class review tests and regular final exams organized by students also promote students' understanding and mastery of knowledge to a certain extent. However, compared to traditional assessment indicators, this division of power is not high. Through the above assessment forms, teachers can identify problems in teaching, explore students' strengths and weaknesses, and promote the improvement of teaching methods.

4. Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Curriculum Assessment Reform

This course adopts a combination of classroom teaching and practical operation to carry out teaching work, in which one student is selected to conduct a course assessment reform experiment and compare the teaching effectiveness. In the past, teaching used a combination of "30% daily grade + 70% final grade" (hereinafter referred to as a 3:7 combination) to evaluate students' final academic performance, while the curriculum assessment reform formed a combination of "60% daily grade+40% final grade" (hereinafter referred to as a 6:4 combination). By comparing different forms of assessment methods, the results presented are as follows:

4.1. Student Grades

According to the previous 3:7 combination assessment model, students' evaluation is based on four parts: attendance rate (5%), class interaction (10%), essay (15%), and final exam (70%). The average score of the course *Human Behavior and Social Environment* for previous students majoring in social work was not high, with an overall average score of about 60-70, an excellent rate of 10-15%, and a failure rate of 8-12%. When reviewing the test paper, it was found that some students still rely on rote memorization and rote application to master knowledge, and some of them appear to be arrogant when answering questions. When dealing with case analysis type questions, their analytical ability is slightly insufficient. After the implementation of curriculum assessment reform, the basis for student evaluation has also changed, shifting from emphasizing "knowledge testing" to "ability testing", with diverse forms. Student grades have also undergone significant changes, with an overall score of around 70-80, resulting in an increase in excellence rates and a significant decrease in failure rates. Most students have gained a deeper understanding of the relevant knowledge of this course, and some students have privately expressed that they have gained a deeper understanding of certain concepts and theories.[3]

4.2. Student Research Results

After a semester of experimentation, students' practical skills have greatly improved. Class students complete 8 short videos of different life stages according to the course timeline. Some groups complete the videos with good quality, which can appropriately highlight the important tasks of the selected research stage in life. They interpret the interaction between environment and behavior from the perspective of the parties involved, and can identify problems and actively explore methods to solve them. At the same time, students should also improve their hands-on skills, including shooting methods, dubbing and subtitles, video editing, and other media promotion skills, which are also necessary skills for entering social work service positions in the future. Some groups have also shown outstanding performance in the research of stage focus issues, referring to a large amount of materials for understanding, delving deeper, analyzing, and solving ideas. They can also fully express their ideas during PPT presentations. Many students expressed great interest in specific issues during the research process and are willing to continue in-depth research. All students in the class have completed the *Biographical Analysis of Characters* and received preliminary training in writing skills. Driven by the *Human Behavior and Social Environment* course project, some students participated in conference forum submissions, research on university student innovation and entrepreneurship projects, and topic selection for their graduation thesis. It not only enhances students' research and practical abilities, but also further accumulates course output results.

5. Conclusion

The reform of curriculum assessment is one of the important measures to adapt to the new concept of humanities, and it is a positive attempt and innovation to break away from traditional educational methods. The reform of the assessment of the course *Human Behavior and Social Environment* has not been carried out for a long time and there are still many imperfections. However, from the perspective of teaching effectiveness, it is more suitable for the goal of cultivating applied talents in social work and is one of the important directions worth further exploration. Whether it is traditional examination evaluation methods or such process oriented assessment methods, if we can continue to explore and try, adhere to the "student-centered" principle, and achieve teaching objectives and effectiveness as the purpose, it is valuable and

meaningful.

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