

Customized Teaching: the Teaching Reform of Marketing Planning

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Abstract: The customized teaching mode of Marketing Planning refers to the flexible instructional plan in teaching. In this way, students select a certain proportion of class hours or content to be customized or they choose in the existing menu. In the meantime, the customized teaching mode is not simply a “determined-by-students” mechanical style, but to create a benign learning atmosphere, guide students to consider their own needs and speak actively to express their ideas by virtue of the interaction between teachers and students. Two important features of this teaching mode lie in “interactivity” and “customization”, which allow students actively participate in the process of teaching. Besides, it provides students with one-to-one guidance to fully arouse their learning enthusiasm, thus prompting them to play the main role. Meanwhile, the teacher can have a full picture of the teaching procedure during interaction. Additionally, goldbricking behaviors such as getting a lift from students, arriving late, leaving early and following others blindly, can also be avoided.

1. Introduction

Marketing Planning is a core application course in major of marketing management, which is generally conducted based on the assumption that students have mastered Market Investigation and Forecast, Consumer Behavior, Management and other basic theoretical courses. The main purpose is to test students' practical operation ability of using marketing strategy to carry out Marketing Planning [1]. This course is of strong applicability and practicality, and represents the necessary theoretical guidance and operation guide for all marketing positions. However, as the technology progresses and the Internet popularizes, the marketing means have been updated more and more rapidly. Thus, the job market has put forward various new requirements for professionals in Marketing Planning, such as new media marketing, advertorial promotion, IP marketing, etc. Meanwhile, modern college students tend to come up with more and more individualized requirements for the teaching content of Marketing Planning due to their own needs of competitions and interns. Increasing opportunities are provided for students to participate in the planning contests inside and outside campus, such as the brand planning competition of our school, the Provincial College Student Business Plan Competition and the competitions sponsored by enterprises. Moreover, the students majoring in marketing generally begin to practice their interns in the third year of college. Hence, there are three challenges ahead the teaching of Marketing Planning: Firstly, to provide students with the opportunities to practice and learn in the real marketing situation; secondly, to closely follow the realistic development and variations in the theory and practice of Marketing Planning, and update the teaching content with times; thirdly, to meet the personalized study demands of students. This paper proposed a customized teaching mode for Marketing Planning to address the problems above.

2. Representation of customized teaching mode

2.1 Course content

The customized mode proposed that the teaching plan should encompass two parts, that is, the core Must Say and the students' customized content. The core Must Say of Marketing Planning includes the concept and idea of Marketing Planning, the flow and organization of Marketing Planning, marketing strategy STP planning, marketing 4Ps planning, marketing special topic planning (brand planning, corporate image planning, public relations planning, advertising planning, etc.). All of these are focuses that students must master in the training plan for marketing specialty, which should be lectured by teachers completely. On the other hand, the students' customized content is to determine the learning topics by students, which can be completed in the first class of the curriculum by means of interaction between teachers and students. In my teaching of Marketing Planning last year, topics that students have customized include advertorial design, WeChat and Weibo marketing, business etiquette and IP creation.

At the first meeting, teachers should introduce the course information and themselves to the students, and then get the students to do a self-introduction for a minute by one, containing the reasons for selecting this course, what knowledge they hope to acquire and so on. In this process, teachers should take care to create a relaxing and pleasant atmosphere, and spur students to feel comfortable speaking up. Again, everyone should speak, mainly because the students are less active and shy, and speaking in turn can eliminate their attempts to escape. Generally, less than 10 in each 50-student class will propose new topics, and the rest will follow the crowd. Teachers should record these topics, and finally discuss with the students to select the topics that most students support, whose number should not exceed four. In this way, it will not exert huge pressure on teachers to update their teaching plans, and they will enjoy enough time to complete. I usually spend 4 class hours to lecture the customized theme of students, which has not affected the core Must Say and the tutorial and assessment of the assignments for the project team.

2.2 Assignments and assessment methods

Unlike the case teaching method used in basic theory courses such as Marketing Management, the project teaching method is generally adopted in application-oriented courses such as Marketing Planning [1]. The project teaching method began in Germany in the 1980s, which has been gradually popularized worldwide and broadly used in planning courses [3]. Specifically, it is a teaching method in reference with the work process at the workplace. Marketing Planning designs the completion process of the project based on the planning process of the sales, and examines the students through accomplishing a practical project [1]. Project-oriented teaching can reach practical, comprehensive and experiential teaching purposes. Furthermore, students can verify their theoretical knowledge and skills through team participation in completing practical projects, foster their sense of work responsibility and teamwork skill in the process of completing projects, as well as the ability to address complex problems using comprehensive knowledge and skills [3].

In the Marketing Planning course, the style of customized teaching mode can also be seen from project selection. Operability in practice is the basic principle of project selection, and students' interest is the impetus for motivating them to actively study and explore. I usually encourage students to select projects by themselves after I specify the limitation, allow them to participate in the decision-making of teaching, and beef up their learning initiative and satisfaction. Two options are provided for projects: Firstly, students can conduct marketing investigation and planning for the internal organizations at school or the small businesses in its surrounding area. The proximity of the geographical location can facilitate investigation, interview and observation, including the libraries, canteens, fruit shops, cafés, gyms, barber shops, convenience stores, driving schools, etc. Secondly, they can carry out marketing investigation and planning for well-known brands in the school market. It is relatively easy to get the second-hand information of famous enterprises. Additionally, with the high popularity of enterprises at school, it is easier to investigate their first-hand information. Students often choose products or services they need, and the projects they have implemented include Midea washing machines, Nestle coffee, Huawei mobile phones, JD, etc [4].

The assessment methods of Marketing Planning should include two aspects of process and result. The process assessment is completed mainly through daily attendance and project guidance class. Marketing Planning mainly has two stages of tasks, that is, marketing investigation and marketing planning. Correspondingly, the project guidance also falls into two stages. The two guidance and discussion sessions mainly examine the progress of the project and the participation of the discussion, which should be scored and recorded accordingly. The result assessment occurs at the end of the semester. For group performance, the completion of the project will be assessed and graded in the form of PPT presentation, which examines the investigation and planning content, PPT production, speech, oral expression and other aspects. For individual performance, each student is required to submit a personal report on their job and feelings in the team and is then scored based on group performance. This assessment method considers on a combination of the process and result, as well as the group performance and individual performance, which is basically fair and reasonable, and achieves the purpose of efficient incentive.

2.3 Interaction between teachers and students

Project guidance is mainly embodied in class discussion, and teachers' one-to-one guidance to student opinion leaders and group. At the beginning of project guidance, teachers should budget the timing, such as lecture time, thinking time, discussion time and summary time. During the process of project guidance, each group is required to carry out a discussion. Stepping down from the stage to enter each group, the teacher first inspects the completion of the preliminary work, then carefully listens to the students' discussion on the follow-up work, and timely proposes enlightening vague problems, guiding them to think deeply and analyze from multiple angles. In this way, they can prepare alternatives from various possibilities, and analyze and evaluate each scheme to make appropriate decisions. When students have trouble in considering, the teacher should properly instruct their thinking and direction and ensure that the project discussion smoothly proceeds without deviation from the main body. Or the teacher should answer students' various questions in time to accelerate the discussion. At this time, the teacher should take care to drawing out students' learning initiative and activeness, allowing them to voluntarily participate in group discussion, think about the issues in the project, and coordinate to deal with these issues. In this process, the teacher can understand the project process, thinking direction and knowledge mastery of students as well as the real results of discussion. Moreover, the teacher needs to summarize students' achievements, questions and errors in the discussion, and make different summaries in terms of targeted project groups

3. Conclusions

The customized teaching of Marketing Planning provides students with opportunities to be engaged in teaching decision-making, maximizes students' study initiative and zeal, and update teaching contents with the times to maintain advanced teaching. More rarely, this method meet students' personalized demands and help them handle problems in competitions or internships. However, the following points should also be noted when implementing customized teaching:

1) Customization of content proportion. The students' needs can not be satisfied without limits, as some topics that are too novel and mature do not suit for classroom teaching. To illustrate, the emerging fields like unmanned retail and commercial 5G, which have not yet been guided by systematical theories to practice. Meanwhile, students are prone to mislead by one-sided materials. Therefore, this customization calls for clear explanation to students. It can be understood through case discussion instead of theory lecture.

2) Utilization of multimedia tools. Teachers and students can directly search for some questions, cases, advertisements, news, etc. through network and smart phones, and identify answers and evidence at the scene.

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