

Study on the Status and Countermeasures of Practical Ability Training for College Students

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Keywords: practical ability training, status, countermeasures, college students.

Abstract: Through the questionnaire survey, the paper analyses the present situation and inadequate of practical ability training for college students, and puts forward measures for cultivation of practical ability on aspects of constructing the practical teaching system based on social needs, innovating practice teaching mode, combining theory with practice and expanding the practice bases to provide references for teaching reform.

1. Introduction

The improvement of practical ability is an important reflection of the comprehensive development of college students, as well as the premise of improving the innovation ability, which is of great significance to the employment and entrepreneurship of college students. In the 21st century an important change of talent cultivation in global higher education is from emphasizing knowledge learning and accumulation to ability cultivation and comprehensive quality improvement [1]. Practical teaching is an important approach for college students to cultivate the professional ability. In order to further understand the current situation of practical teaching in management specialty, questionnaire survey was conducted in this study on 203 college students from school of management. The purpose was to analyze the status and inadequate of practical ability training and propose corresponding countermeasures to promote the development of talent training.

2. Objects and Methods

The survey was conducted in October 23-30, 2017. The objects of the investigation were the college students in management specialty. The survey content included student's cognition of practical activities, the situation and shortcomings of practical ability training in college. Five classes were selected by cluster sampling method, and self-designed questionnaire was linked to a specific website and distributed to the survey objects. The respondents scanned the QR code through their mobile phones or opened the link from the computer to answer the question, and then submitted the answer. The investigator collected survey results from internet and made statistical analysis. In addition, we interviewed teachers in school of management from different universities in Hunan, Hubei, Zhejiang province, etc. The interview outline included the method, measures and deficiency of practical ability training in colleges and universities.

3. Survey Results

3.1. Basic Situation of the Respondents

A total of 203 college students were surveyed, including 48 males, accounting for 23.6%, and 155 females, accounting for 76.4%. Among the respondents, 40.9% were sophomores, 32.5% juniors and 26.6% seniors. Nearly half of them had been served as student leaders. Most of the respondents participated in various associations and student union activities organized by the school, of which 28% often participated, 68% attended occasionally, only 3.9% never attended those activities.

3.2. College Students' Views on Practical Activities

In self-evaluation, 73% of the respondents rated their personal practical ability as general (See Fig.1). 21% of them were satisfied and 6% were dissatisfied with personal practical ability. As for whether to participate in practical activities, 98% of the respondents considered it worthwhile to participate or try, and only 2% didn't care.

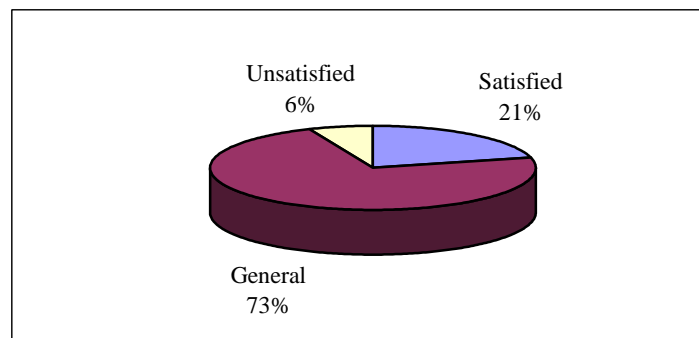


Figure 1: Respondent's self-evaluation on practical ability.

All the respondents believed the improvement of practical ability were helpful for future employment, among which 28% considered it was of great help and 72% thought it was helpful. As for the role of participating in practical activities, the majority of respondents held that they could learn knowledge outside the classroom, accumulate social experience (74.9%), strengthen the professional knowledge (64.5%), improve comprehensive quality (67%) and make new friends (50.7%). (See table 1.)

Table 1: Respondent s' view of practical activities.

The role of practical activities	Number of People	Percentage (%)
Learning knowledge outside the classroom and accumulating social experience	152	74.9
Improving comprehensive quality and social adaptability	136	67
Strengthening the professional knowledge and skills	131	64.5
Meeting new friends and expanding social network	103	50.7

3.3. The Status of Cultivation of Practical Ability in College

57.6% of respondents were satisfied with the method of cultivating practical ability. 23.2% of them were not satisfied with it and 19.2% doesn't matter (See Table 2). As for the number of social

practice activities provided by the college, 67% of respondents thought it was medium, 11.3% held it was more and 21.7% thought it was less. The majority of respondents (76.4%) considered that practical courses were very few in comparison with theoretical courses. The common forms of practice for respondents were social survey, project research, part-time job, course practical training, professional practice, discipline competition and so on.

Table 2: Respondent's evaluation on the training of practical ability in college.

Evaluation	Number of People	Percentage (%)
Satisfied	117	57.6
Doesn't matter	39	19.2
Unsatisfied	47	23.2

There were some inadequate in traditional practical ability training such as few practical activities related to professional knowledge, shortage of practice training bases and ignoring differences between individual students.

4. Discussion

The survey found most of the respondents (73%) self-rated their practical ability as general, respondents believed that the improvement of personal quality and ability by participating in practical activities were conducive to personal employment and social expansion, and wished to improve practical ability through more related activities. With the development of higher education, practical teaching has made great progress, but there is still room for further improvement. Traditional talent training has the following deficiencies:

4.1. Less Practical Courses and Practice Hours

In the traditional advanced education, teachers mainly imparted knowledge, and there were less practical courses and practical teaching hours. The evaluation of students focused on the mastery of theoretical knowledge, which lacked the comprehensive assessment of practical ability. With the development of the society, the demand for talents is increasingly emphasizing the application and practical ability. It requires the teaching plan to increase the practical courses, and attach to the cultivation of students' innovative thinking and practical ability, in the meanwhile update the practical teaching content according to social needs.

4.2. Insufficient Comprehensive Ability of Students

From the employment situation in the past, the comprehensive quality of students was insufficient, for example, there was a disconnection between theory and practice, some students mastered theoretical knowledge but couldn't apply knowledge to solve the practical problems. For its reasons, on the one hand, the minority of students lacked initiative in learning; on the other hand, practical training in school was less for students.

4.3. Shortage of Teaching Practice Bases

As an applied subject, talents cultivation should not only impart theoretical knowledge, but also attach to the practical ability training. It's necessary to expand teaching bases. Capital investment is needed in the construction of on-campus practical base. To build off-campus practice base, joint

channels need to be found between university and enterprise. The shortage of practice bases in some schools led to few practical opportunities for students.

5. Countermeasures for Improving Cultivation of Practical Ability

5.1. Optimizing Practical Teaching System According to Social Needs

Practical teaching is an important approach to improve comprehensive ability for college students. The main task of higher education is to improve talents' abilities, especially the ability of independent thinking, creation, communication and information processing. The teaching plan can design corresponding practical courses according to the social needs, and increase hours and opportunity of practical training in school. The construction of course system and teaching content should not only consider systematic and theoretical nature of the subject, but also focus on cultivating practice and innovation ability. By adding more practical link in teaching content, it would effectively improve the students' practical and innovative ability.

5.2. Innovating Teaching Modes and Combining Theory with Practice

The reform of teaching method is the key to improve the quality of education and the standard of talents [2]. The cultivation of applied talents should attach importance to active and interactive learning and emphasize the combination of theory and practice. This requires changing traditional teaching mode of one-way knowledge transmission, from "*teaching-centered*" to "*learning-centered*", and focusing on ability development.

The first is to change the form of classroom teaching in theoretical courses from the traditional one-way teaching to discussion, case - based teaching. For example, in case teaching, practical cases could be supplemented in the explanation of theoretical knowledge. PBL, flipped classroom, mixed teaching, five-star teaching method and other forms can be used to help students better understand relevant theoretical knowledge and effectively improve students' professional quality.

The second is to increase extracurricular practical training such as project teaching, social survey and other comprehensive practice links to improve students' comprehensive application of knowledge. Based on the status of different students, teachers can guide students to conduct targeted practical research and exploration, and cultivate students' innovative thinking and exploration spirit. Take the course of *Social survey and methods* as an example, students are required to carry on survey by group, and each group needs to select research topic, design questionnaires, conduct field survey, collect data, analyze data and write research reports, by which students could think independently and cooperate with each other. In addition, practical ability could be cultivated through strengthening graduation thesis, graduation practice and other links such as professional internship and practice, market research, vocational certificate examination training and discipline competition, etc..

The third is to reform evaluation system by changing the final examination to process evaluation and the *knowledge-based* exam to *ability-based* assessment. Besides the examination papers, comprehensive assessment could include extracurricular reading, practical operation skills and survey project design. It's necessary to explore a variety of evaluation methods to promote students' comprehensive ability [3].

5.3. Expanding Practical Teaching Bases and Joint Education between Schools and Enterprises

It's necessary to expand practical bases, and establish stable school-enterprise cooperation. For

on-campus practical bases, it's crucial to standardize practical teaching process, consolidate the teaching team, allocate resources reasonably to improve the teaching quality. The practical bases off-campus should take the way of combining the industry, learning and research [4]. Through on-the-spot practice in enterprises, students can deepen understanding of the knowledge and improve the interest in participating in practice.

The management department in medical universities can establish diversified cooperation with health organizations, pharmaceutical enterprises and other public management institutions to share resources in practical bases. For example, School of management in HUCM (*Hubei University of Chinese Medicine*) works with some pharmaceutical enterprises to cultivate talents such as *reserve store manager*. Students are sent regularly to enterprises for internship and practical training, which not only improves the students' practical skills and provides the basis for future work, and also trains talents for enterprises. School-enterprise cooperation should be based on the common interests of both sides to form a community of mutual benefit to ensure its stable and healthy development [5].

In conclusion, cultivation of practical ability needs the cooperation of society, enterprise, universities and colleges. By strengthening the practical teaching system, innovating practical teaching mode and expanding practice bases, it can effectively improve the comprehensive skills of talents.

Acknowledgments

The paper was supported by the Teaching research project in Hubei province. (No. 2017355).

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