Research on Cross-border E-commerce Practice Teaching Reform Based on Collaborative Education Perspective

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Abstract. This study takes cross-border e-commerce practice teaching reform as research object, aims to actively carry out cross-border e-commerce practice teaching reform, and improve students’ vocational abilities. It adopts the method combining practical research and theoretical analysis, proposes the strategic suggestions: Perfecting the curriculum system, innovating teaching modes, optimizing the content of practical teaching, and establishing a university-enterprise alliance. The research results can effectively cultivate long-term mechanisms for talents, which will help students to meet capability requirements of cross-border e-commerce positions.

1 Introduction

With the continuous expansion of cross-border e-commerce transactions in China, enterprises are in urgent need of a large number of high-quality composite talents. Driven by cross-border transactions and e-commerce dual engines, China's cross-border e-commerce is growing rapidly. According to Media Research data, the overall transaction scale (including retail and B2B) of cross-border e-commerce in China reached 7.6 trillion yuan in 2017, reached 9.1 trillion yuan in 2018, and is expected to reach 10.8 trillion in 2019 [1]. The growth rate is considerable, and the rapid development of cross-border e-commerce industry has brought an urgent need for cross-border e-commerce talents. As to universities, this is not only an opportunity, but also a challenge. Therefore, colleges and universities that focus on cultivating applied talents should follow the trend of the times, actively explore new ways of collaborative education, integrate multiparty resources, and jointly cultivate cross-border e-commerce talents who are suitable for social needs.

2 Core Competence Analysis of Cross-Border E-Commerce Talents

The cross-border e-commerce industry combines the characteristics of international trade, business English, and e-commerce, and requires cross-border e-commerce merchants to have the following business capabilities:

1) International trade operation capability

Cross-border e-commerce business mainly includes these contents: commodity introduction, online platform, offline stores, overseas logistics, bonded warehousing, customs declaration and inspection, order distribution, calculation and settlement, marketing promotion and after-sales service. Students need to master and skillfully use the relevant theoretical knowledge of international trade, which require them to have strong international trade operation ability.

2) E-commerce operation capability

Online trading is the most basic feature of cross-border e-commerce. Firstly, cross-border e-commerce practitioners need to be familiar with the rules and operations of major e-commerce platforms, and have certain practical experience. Secondly, they can use B2B and B2C style. Using the network platform and search engine, customers can sign contract according to the contents
agreed by parties to the transaction, and successfully fulfill the contract in accordance with the international trade process. Thirdly, it is necessary to have the ability to process pictures and videos, and to renovate and beautify the store through the platform. With these abilities, users can effectively manage store operations, quickly release product information, and complete online transactions, payment and distribution services. With the application of 5G technology, continuous development of cross-border export B2B branding and self-built independent stations, enterprises will pay more attention to the e-commerce operation capabilities of employees [2].

(3) Network marketing and promotion capabilities
Because of the large differences in political, economic, legal, and cultural environments between the two parties, practitioners need to have global multilevel cross-border marketing skills. Students are required to have a keen market insight, to be able to analyze the effectiveness from the perspective of customer needs according to market conditions, and to correctly control the overall operation of store through data analysis, rationally locate consumer groups, accurately mine product selling points, and adopt flexible marketing means for network marketing and promotion.

(4) Customer service communication ability
Customer service communication abilities require practitioners to be proficient in using English to communicate with customers on the network platform in voice, written, video, etc., to answer questions about product design, quality, usage, packaging, transportation, warranty, price, tax and other issues. They also need to properly handle customer disputes and customer returns. In addition, many cross-border e-commerce platforms require different languages, and more and more companies require small languages such as Japanese, German, and Russian.

3 Problems in Practice Teaching of Cross-Border E-Commerce

(1) Unclear orientation of talent training
At present, only a few universities can offer cross-border e-commerce training, most universities only serve as a direction for international trade, e-commerce and other majors. There is no mature talent training program, just have the traditional international trade courses plus e-commerce courses [3]. These conditions result in unclear orientation of training objectives, and unclear curriculum system, which is not helpful to cultivate qualified cross-border e-commerce talents.

(2) Imperfect curriculum system and practical teaching time
In order to cater to the needs of cross-border e-commerce talents, some colleges and universities just added several practical courses of cross-border e-commerce on the basis of traditional professional curriculum system, ignoring the comprehensive nature of cross-border e-commerce, which cannot form a complete curriculum system. In addition, in the training course setting, due to the limitations of teaching resources and training conditions, there are relatively few practical training sessions and lack of effective guidance in the training process.

(3) Imperfect teaching method and teaching content
In practice teaching, it is usually based on teachers’ presentations and students’ grouping operations. The content of training is also given by teachers in advance, and can be operated step by step. But the hands-on operation is relatively mechanical and simple, it is difficult to stimulate students' learning interests. In addition, when guiding the experimental training, some teachers often focus on the relevant software and experimental instructions of the research laboratory. Most of them are based on the textbook, lack of in-depth processing of the teaching materials, and lack of careful organization and guidance to student activities. Thus, this kind of design is not conducive to inspire students’ imagination and innovative thinking.

(4) Simple cooperation between universities and enterprises
In most colleges and universities, the practice teaching is mainly carried out by using e-commerce platform simulation operation software in the laboratory or a limited external cooperation enterprise. In the new era of cross-border e-commerce, there are many platforms, the rules are ever-changing, the speed of software updating cannot keep up with the development and changes of the e-commerce platform, the simulation operation has no real sense of reality and
urgency of real business operation, and the motivation for students to learn is insufficient. In addition, in the off-campus internship teaching, as the universities and enterprise have not formed an effective mechanism for joint training of professional talents, enterprises often do not want to accept students due to commercial secrets, operational safety, production rhythm and other reasons, and do not take the initiative to train students. Thus, most of the off-campus internships stay at the level of corporate visits and simple training.

(5) Lack of high-level practical instructors with practical experience

At present, the cross-border e-commerce teachers in most universities are relatively weak. From the perspective of teacher allocation, one reason is that, cross-border e-commerce is an emerging industry, and most of the professional teachers are transformed from international trade and e-commerce, so they lack industry background, and have no actual operational experience. The second reason is that, part-time teachers are hired from enterprises, although they have rich practical experience, but due to qualification requirements, and limited energy, funding and management, most of them can only occasionally participate in internship guidance, academic lectures and other activities, and rarely go deep into the classroom for practical teaching.

4 Recommendations for Cross-Border E-Commerce Practice Teaching Reform

(1) Clarify goal of talent training and optimize training plan

Firstly, colleges and universities should closely combine teaching reform with the needs of industry, aim at cultivating core abilities of applied talents, focus on professional construction, actively explore the mode of collaborative education, and determine the professional training standards according to the new requirements of cross-border e-commerce occupational groups. Secondly, universities should accurately position talent training objectives and specifications, continuously optimize talent training programs, and integrate international trade, e-commerce, logistics management, business English, computer and other related professional resources. Thirdly, universities should adopt advanced practice teaching mode, set up three different training levels and stages, that is, the general education stage, simulation actual stage, and post-internship or the start-up incubation stage, thus, the goal of cross-border electric talent training can be better achieved.

(2) Improve curriculum system and increase practical teaching time

In the curriculum setting, universities must closely follow the development of cross-border e-commerce industry, and combine the skills required for professional positions, to build a reasonable and systematic professional curriculum system. Fully considering the comprehensive characteristics of cross-border e-commerce industry, set the relevant theoretical and practical courses according to specific requirements of talents in related positions, and appropriately increase the proportion of practice hours[4]. Strengthen cross-border e-commerce practice, customs clearance, e-commerce English, e-commerce logistics, e-commerce comprehensive training and other curriculum construction, and appropriately increase cross-border e-commerce training, such as visual marketing, professional courses in web-page design, photo and video technology processing, etc., so as to improve students' hands-on ability.

(3) Innovate teaching mode and optimize practical teaching content

Firstly, encourage teachers to adopt a more flexible and more conducive teaching model for inquiry heuristics, role-playing, project teaching, and cooperative learning. In practice teaching, the main role of students and the guiding role of teachers are highlighted, and scientific inquiry is the main method of acquiring knowledge, which can stimulate students' interest in learning and subjective initiative.

Secondly, explore the attempt to contextualize the digital teaching model. That is to say, teachers use interactive smart phones to teach, through wireless interconnection, they can effectively integrate into the “teaching”, “learning” and “evaluation” links, to realize various functions such as teaching interaction, real-time evaluation and teaching resource sharing.

Thirdly, promote the teaching mode of "combination of teaching and learning, learning in
competition". Relying on the "all open" laboratory, set up a discipline competition platform, organize students to participate in cross-border e-commerce actual combat competitions at all levels, such as the national college students cross-border e-commerce innovation and entrepreneurship competition. Most of these competitions are based on real stores[5]. Through the competition, students can improve their learning enthusiasm, master the platform operation skills, familiarize themselves with the platform rules, and improve the ability to actually operate the store. This kind of practical competition mode can effectively solve the outstanding problems, such as the general lack of practical opportunities for students, and lack of basic entrepreneurial skills, thus can further improve employment competitiveness of students.

(4) Actively promote collaborative education and establish a long-term mechanism

Cross-border electric businessmen are not "teaching" in the classroom, but "doing" from actual combat projects. Therefore, training and practical teaching are the key to cultivating cross-border electric businessmen. Colleges and universities should actively explore new modes of collaborative education, integrate multiparty resources, and establish a long-term mechanism for joint training of talents.

Firstly, improve laboratory conditions in universities. Increase investment, purchase platform and virtual simulation software system, create a real cross-border e-commerce virtual environment, let students play different roles in cross-border e-commerce business, and experience the specific tasks faced by different parties, so as to experience cross-border e-commerce transaction processes and customer service.

Secondly, build a cross-border e-commerce start-up incubator center. The universities provide a venue and network environment to attract enterprises to bring real projects in, enterprises can set up part of the platform operations in the cross-border e-commerce start-up incubator center. Both schools and enterprises give full play to their respective advantages and jointly undertake the guidance of students' internship training, subject competitions, and entrepreneurial projects, they both undertake the evaluation and supervision of practical teaching, and the training of enterprise employees. This will help achieve a “win-win” situation for schools and enterprises. On the one hand, schools can keep abreast of industry dynamics and adjust practical teaching content in real time, which can enhance teachers' practical teaching ability and level, and enable students to truly complete operations on cross-border e-commerce platforms, such as stores, product launches, marketing promotion, reply inquiry, processing orders, etc., to better cultivate students' practical ability. On the other hand, enterprises can participate in guiding students' internship training, subject competitions, and entrepreneurship projects, etc. They can promote students to carry out network marketing planning and promotion, organize employee skills training, improve marketing capabilities, and choose suitable talents[6].

Thirdly, integrate multiparty resources and build a cross-border electric merchant to cultivate the base. In line with the principle of "co-creation, joint construction, and sharing", government will guide, university will cooperate, enterprise will participate, gathering government, universities, enterprises, research institutes and other resources, we can build a cross-border electric merchant cultivation base[7]. The base can integrate resources such as training programs, part-time positions, financial services, supply providers, and third-party service providers, and corporate customers to build the comprehensive training platform for practical training and entrepreneurship. In this base, teachers can better specialize in training courses, such as cross-border e-commerce platform interpretation and practice, global store operation problem analysis, case sharing, etc., thus can improve the professional level of teachers.

(5) Cultivate teachers and build an excellent practical teaching team

Colleges and universities should take more measures, to increase the intensity of external training, and establish a faculty with strong theoretical and practical skills and reasonable personnel structure. On the one hand, by selecting teachers to participate in business training and on-the-job training, and encouraging teachers to participate in high-level seminars and exchanges, it is possible to timely understand the frontier dynamics of the industry development and comprehensively
improve the teaching level of college teachers. On the other hand, the business personnel with rich practical experience can be employed as part-time teachers, and the teachers in universities can jointly guide the practical training courses, and create a “double-type” teacher team with sound theoretical foundation and practical experience.

5 Conclusion

As a new form of China's foreign trade development, cross-border e-commerce is in a stage of rapid development, and it is in urgent need of a large number of high-quality cross-border electric businessmen. Therefore, colleges and universities should clarify the goal of talent training, optimize the talent training program, improve the curriculum system, increase the practice teaching time, innovate the teaching mode, optimize the practical teaching content, actively promote collaborative education mode, and establish a long-term mechanism for joint training of talents. Thus, it can create an excellent practical teaching team, to carry out cross-border e-commerce practice teaching reform, so as to cultivate the high-quality cross-border e-commerce talents suitable for the development needs of the industry.

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