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TRANSFORMING EDUCATION: HANDS-ON TEACHING FOR INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS AND TRADE IN THE MODERN LIBERAL ARTS ERA

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Abstract: The field of international economy and trade is evolving in response to the accelerating forces of globalization and shifting economic landscapes. Traditional theoretical coursework is no longer sufficient to equip students with the practical skills and abilities demanded by these new challenges. Consequently, there is a growing focus on developing a practical teaching system for international economy and trade programs within higher education institutions.

This paper delves into the international landscape, where scholars have proposed various theoretical frameworks and practical experiences. These offer valuable insights and inspiration for enhancing education in this field. For instance, Yulian J has explored talent cultivation models emphasizing practical teaching projects to nurture students' practical skills, teamwork, and innovative thinking. Wu G has examined strategies for adapting international economy and trade to the e-commerce environment, emphasizing collaboration among universities, enterprises, and government institutions. Shuo C has explored the integration of practical teaching in music education to enhance students' comprehensive skills and cross-disciplinary abilities.

While these studies have made valuable contributions, challenges such as limited practical resources and the integration of practical and theoretical coursework persist. This article focuses on cultivating practical abilities, promoting interdisciplinary integration, fostering a seamless blend of theory and practice, introducing innovative teaching methods, and offering personalized learning support.

Keywords: International Economy and Trade, Practical Teaching, Interdisciplinary Integration, Innovative Teaching Methods, Personalized Learning Support

1. Introduction

With the acceleration of globalization and the change of economic situation, the training objectives of international economy and trade specialty are facing new challenges. Traditional theoretical courses can't meet the needs of students' practical ability and skills. Therefore, the construction of practical teaching system of international economy and trade specialty in colleges and universities has attracted much attention [1-2].

In other countries, many scholars have proposed a series of theoretical frameworks and practical experiences, providing valuable reference and inspiration. For example, Yulian J explored the talent cultivation model for international economy and pointed out that the implementation of practical teaching projects should be promoted

to cultivate students' practical skills, team cooperation abilities, and innovative thinking [3]. Wu G explored strategies for the development of international economy and trade in the e-commerce environment. They also strengthened cooperation between universities, enterprises, governments, and other social institutions, providing more practical opportunities and resource support [4]. In addition, Shuo C also explored the practical teaching mode of Internet plus piano to cultivate students' comprehensive quality and cross field ability [5]. However, despite the achievements of these scholars' research, there are still some challenges and shortcomings. The problems of limited practical teaching resources and low integration of practical and theoretical courses still exist. This article has been placed on practical ability cultivation, interdisciplinary integration, organic integration of practice and theory, introduction of innovative teaching methods, and personalized learning support.

2. Construction of Practical Teaching System for International Economy and Trade Majors in Universities

With the rapid growth of international trade and the deepening development of economic globalization, the demand for talents with knowledge and skills in international economy and trade is increasing [6]. These talents not only need to have a solid theoretical foundation, but also practical ability, cross-cultural communication ability, and global perspective [7].

2.1 Importance of Cultivating International Economic and Trade Professionals

Promoting economic development: International economic and trade professionals possess knowledge and skills in cross-border trade, international investment, and market development, which can provide opportunities for enterprises to expand international markets and trade cooperation, and promote economic development [8]. They can analyze the needs and trends of the international market, formulate trade strategies to promote cooperation and trade exchanges among multinational enterprises, and bring more business opportunities and profits to enterprises.

Adapting to economic globalization: With the deepening development of economic globalization, the demand for international economic and trade professionals is increasing [9]. They possess a global perspective and cross-cultural communication ability, and are able to understand and respond to changes in international trade rules, market demand, and competitive environment. They can provide international economic analysis and decision-making support for enterprises, helping them establish themselves and gain competitive advantages in the international market.

Promoting trade liberalization and facilitation: The cultivation of international economic and trade professionals can help promote the process of trade liberalization and facilitation [10]. They can study international trade policies and regulations, analyze trade opportunities and risks, and provide support for government and enterprises in trade policy formulation and trade negotiations, promoting trade liberalization and facilitation and the development of international trade.

Enhancing international competitiveness: The cultivation of international economic and trade professionals can enhance the international competitiveness of countries and regions [11]. They possess international business operation skills, market analysis skills, and cross-cultural communication skills, capable of competing with enterprises from other countries and regions in the international market, promoting the internationalization of national enterprises, and improving the international competitiveness of products and services.

In summary, the cultivation is great significance for promoting trade liberalization and facilitation, and enhancing international competitiveness [12]. By cultivating these talents, strong support can be provided for the economic development, trade cooperation, and international exchanges of countries and regions.

2.2 Background of New Liberal Arts

Students' development needs to focus on cultivating diverse abilities and qualities. Students with a

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new liberal arts background may possess different skills and characteristics, as shown in Figure 1.

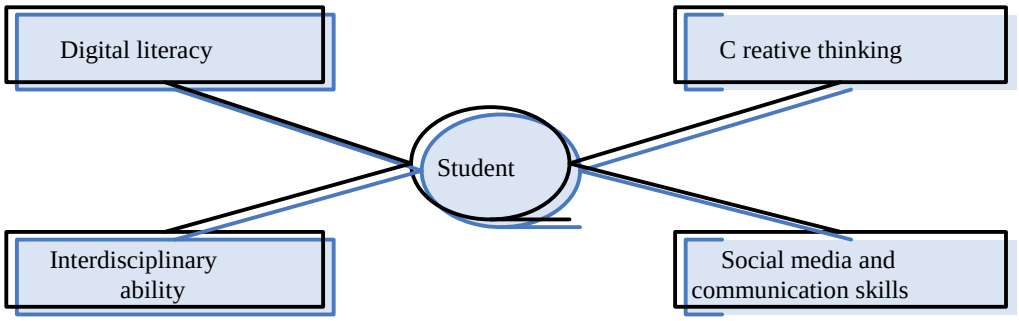

Figure 1: Skills possessed by students in the context of new humanities

Digital literacy: Students with new liberal arts background usually have strong digital skills and information technology capabilities, and can use data analysis, data and information visualization and other tools to solve problems and support decision-making [13].

Innovative thinking: Students with a new liberal arts background typically possess the ability to think creatively and solve problems, adapt to rapidly changing social and economic environments, and propose new perspectives and solutions [14].

Interdisciplinary ability: Students with a new liberal arts background typically possess interdisciplinary knowledge and abilities, and are able to comprehensively apply theories and methods from different disciplines to analyze and solve problems.

Social media and communication skills: Students with a new liberal arts background usually have a certain understanding and experience in social media and digital communication, and can use these tools for information dissemination and social interaction.

Overall, students with a new liberal arts background have certain advantages in technology, digitization, and social change, and these characteristics and abilities may also play an important role in the field of international economy and trade [15], such as in digital trade, e-commerce, data analysis, and so on. However, they may still need to strengthen their learning in traditional disciplines such as economics and trade theory to establish a solid professional foundation. For students with a liberal arts background, they may have some advantages in the following areas:

Language and communication skills: Students with a liberal arts background typically possess good language expression and communication skills, which are crucial for international economics and trade majors [16]. They can better communicate and cooperate with people from different countries and cultural backgrounds.

Cultural understanding and international relations: Students with liberal arts backgrounds typically have a deeper understanding of the culture, history, and politics of different countries [17]. This cultural sensitivity and knowledge of international relations can help them better understand and respond to cultural differences and political risks in international trade.

Research and analysis ability: Students with liberal arts background usually receive systematic research and analysis training, and can use logical thinking and critical thinking to analyze economic and trade issues [18]. This is very helpful for the study and research of international economics and trade majors.

2.3 Necessity of Practical Teaching in International Economy and Trade Majors in Universities

The necessity of practical teaching in international economics and trade majors in universities is self-evident. This is particularly true in the field of international economy and trade, as it involves complex international markets, trade rules, and cross-cultural exchanges. This article aims to enhance practical teaching of international economy and trade majors in universities from four aspects, as shown in Figure 2.

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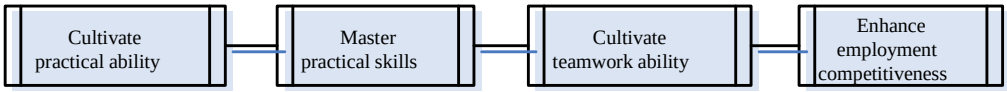

Figure 2: Four aspects of enhancing practical teaching in international economy and trade majors in universities

Developing practical skills: Practical teaching can help students apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations and cultivate their practical abilities. International economy and trade is a highly practical discipline that requires students to possess practical skills and problem-solving skills [19]. Through practical teaching, students can personally experience various aspects of international trade, understand the actual operation process, and cultivate their practical abilities.

Mastering practical skills: Practical teaching can help students master practical application skills. In the field of international economy and trade, students need to possess certain skills, such as market research, trade negotiations, international cooperation, etc. Through practical teaching, students can learn and master these practical skills by participating in real cases and projects [20].

Developing teamwork skills: International economics and trade often require teamwork, and practical teaching can cultivate students' teamwork skills. In practical projects, students need to collaborate with other members to solve problems and complete tasks together. Through practical teaching, students can learn effective communication and collaboration, and cultivate teamwork spirit.

Enhancing employment competitiveness: Practical teaching can improve students' employment competitiveness. In the field of international economy and trade, employers place greater emphasis on students' practical abilities and experience. By participating in practical teaching, students can accumulate practical experience, showcase their abilities and potential, and thereby enhance their competitiveness in the job market.

This article collects some data through a questionnaire survey of students majoring in international economics and trade at X University to reflect the current problems in the practical teaching system. The survey results show that many students believe that practical teaching resources are limited and cannot meet their needs. They hope to have more exposure to the real business environment and interact with actual economic activities. In addition, some students believe that the integration between practical teaching and theoretical courses is not high, and the connection between practical teaching and theoretical knowledge is not close enough. The specific data is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Questionnaire collection data table

Group	Practical teaching link	Industry-university cooperation	International exchange and cooperation	Innovating practical teaching methods	Faculty	Practice site
Number	47	55	68	42	39	86

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The collected data is subjected to overall percentage processing and analysis to obtain Figure 3.

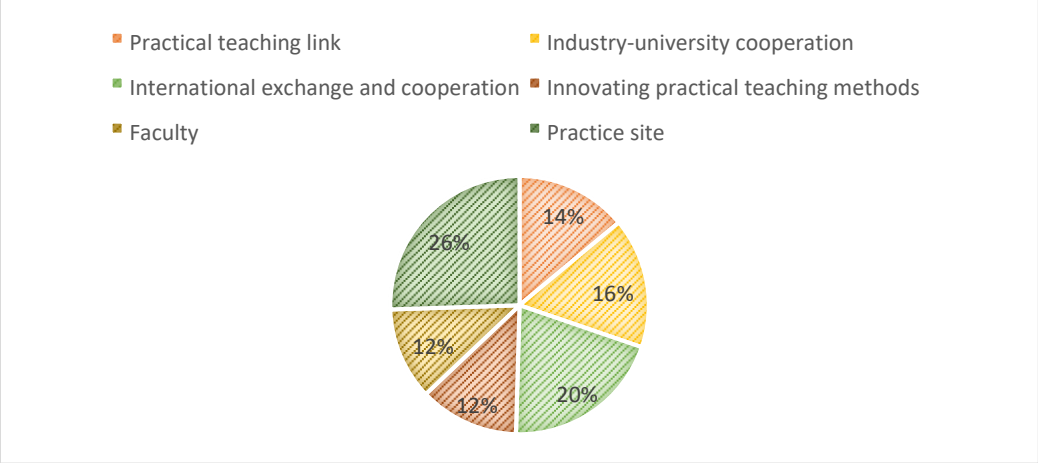

Figure 3: Proportion of data collected from student questionnaires

According to the above chart, it can be clearly seen that the limitations of practice venues have the greatest impact on students' practical development, accounting for 26%. This means that students encounter insufficient or unsuitable venues during practical activities, which greatly limits their practical abilities and development.

In contrast, innovative practical teaching methods and excellent teaching staff have a relatively small impact on students, accounting for only 12%. This indicates that although the quality of teaching methods and teaching staff is still important for students' learning and growth in the practical process, and its impact is relatively limited compared to the limitations of the practice site.

Therefore, in order to promote students' practical development, it is necessary to focus on solving the problem of limited practice venues and providing better practical environments and conditions. At the same time, it is necessary to continue to explore innovative practical teaching methods and strengthen the cultivation of teaching staff to provide a more comprehensive and high-quality practical education experience.

3. Current Situation of the Practical Teaching System for International Economy and Trade Majors in Universities

The increase in practical teaching: Many universities have realized the importance of practical teaching and have begun to add practical teaching to international economics and trade majors, including internships, on-site visits, simulated trade negotiations, and actual case studies. Through these practical steps, students can better understand the actual operation process and improve their practical abilities.

Industry university cooperation projects: Many universities have established cooperative relationships with enterprises and institutions to carry out industry university cooperation projects. These projects can provide opportunities for students to collaborate with practical projects, allowing them to learn and apply knowledge in practice. At the same time, these projects can also meet the needs of enterprises and strengthen the employment competitiveness of students.

International exchange and cooperation: International economics and trade majors in universities also focus on international exchange and cooperation. The school can establish cooperative relationships with other countries' universities or institutions to carry out student exchange projects or joint research projects. Such communication and cooperation can help students understand the trade environment and cultural differences of different countries, enhance their international perspective and cross-cultural communication skills.

Innovative practical teaching methods: Some universities are trying innovative practical teaching methods. For example, an online simulation platform is introduced to allow students to conduct trade simulation operations in a virtual environment; Practical project competitions are organized to stimulate students' innovative thinking and

practical abilities; Social media and digital technology is utilized to expand students' practical scope and communication abilities.

Although there has been some development in practical teaching of international economy and trade majors in universities, there are still some challenges. For example, the limitations of practical teaching resources and the integration of practical links with theoretical courses need to be further addressed. Therefore, universities need to continuously improve their practical teaching system, enhance students' practical abilities and employment competitiveness.

When it comes to the limitations of practical teaching resources, there are mainly the following issues:

Fund limitation: Practical teaching usually requires a large amount of funds to support students to participate in practical projects, field visits, Laboratory equipment, etc. However, the funding of universities is often limited and cannot meet the needs of all practical teaching.

Teacher strength: Practical teaching requires teachers with relevant practical experience and professional knowledge to guide students. However, limited teacher resources and insufficient professional background may limit the implementation of practical teaching.

Practice venue: Some practical teaching requires appropriate venues, such as simulation laboratories, on-site inspections, enterprise internships, etc. However, schools may face issues of insufficient space or inability to provide suitable practical environments.

There are also some challenges in integrating practical and theoretical courses:

Teaching plan design: The integration of practical teaching and theoretical courses needs to consider the balance between practice and theory in the design of teaching plans. However, due to the limitations of curriculum and teaching resources, practical teaching is often only a small part of the curriculum and cannot be fully integrated with theoretical courses.

Teaching method: Practical teaching requires different teaching methods from traditional theoretical courses, such as case analysis, team projects, experiments, etc. However, teachers may lack corresponding training and guidance to effectively apply these teaching methods.

Evaluation method: The evaluation method of practical teaching is usually different from that of theoretical courses, which requires examining students' practical operation ability and problem-solving ability. However, the design and implementation of evaluation methods may face certain difficulties to ensure the fairness and accuracy of the evaluation.

The methods to solve these problems include increasing funding for practical teaching, strengthening the construction of teaching staff, finding suitable practical venues, optimizing teaching plan design, providing teacher training and guidance, and exploring suitable evaluation methods. In addition, establishing cooperative relationships with enterprises and other institutions, conducting industry university cooperation projects, can also provide more resources and support for practical teaching.

4. Strategies for Improving Teaching Quality in the Context of New Liberal Arts

4.1 Training for Practical Abilities

In the context of the new liberal arts, focusing on cultivating students' practical abilities is the key to improving teaching quality. Traditional theoretical courses can no longer meet the needs of students, so increasing practical links has become a necessary measure. By adding practical links, students can participate in practical activities firsthand, enhancing their practical and problem-solving abilities. A common approach is to carry out practical projects and collaborate with enterprises, government agencies, or non-profit organizations to enable students to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned in practical work environments. Such practical projects can help students understand the needs and challenges of practical work, and cultivate their practical and teamwork abilities. In addition, organizing field trips is also an effective way to cultivate students' practical ability. By visiting enterprises, participating in trade show or visiting trade centers, students can better understand the

operating mechanism of international trade, understand actual problems and challenges, and learn how to solve these problems.

4.2 Strengthening Interdisciplinary Integration

One of the characteristics of the new liberal arts is the emphasis on interdisciplinary comprehensiveness, which provides more possibilities for teaching international economics and trade majors. One method is to offer interdisciplinary courses or projects that organically combine subjects such as economics, international relations, and law to cultivate students' comprehensive qualities and innovative abilities. For example, designing an interdisciplinary course that allows students to learn knowledge from different disciplines and understand their relationships, cultivating the ability to solve practical problems. In addition, interdisciplinary projects are organized to enable students to apply interdisciplinary knowledge and methods in practice, such as simulating international trade negotiation projects, and exercise team cooperation, problem-solving, and innovative thinking abilities. Collaborative teaching is also an interdisciplinary teaching method that invites experts from different disciplines to participate in teaching. Students collaborate in teams to complete tasks, cultivate comprehensive qualities and innovative abilities. By introducing knowledge and methods from different disciplines, promoting interdisciplinary integration can provide a more comprehensive and innovative teaching experience, and cultivate students' ability to adapt to complex international economic environments.

4.3 Promoting the Organic Combination of Practice and Theory

The organic combination of practical teaching and theoretical courses is an important way to improve teaching effectiveness and cultivate students' abilities. Firstly, practical cases and practical problems can be introduced into theoretical courses. Through case analysis, discussion, and group projects, theoretical knowledge can be applied to practical situations, helping students understand and master theoretical knowledge, and applying it to practice. Secondly, the practical aspect can serve as an extension and practical application of theoretical courses, allowing students to personally experience and apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned, and cultivating their ability to operate and solve problems in practice. In addition, through practical reports, practical summaries, and reflections, practical experience is combined with theoretical knowledge to help students transform practical experience into knowledge and ability accumulation, and improve their comprehensive quality and analytical ability. Finally, teachers can evaluate and guide students' practical achievements and theoretical learning through discussion and feedback, helping them better understand and apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned. In short, the organic combination of practical teaching and theoretical courses can improve teaching effectiveness and cultivate students' abilities.

4.4 Introduction of Innovative Teaching Methods

In the context of new liberal arts, the introduction of innovative teaching methods can stimulate students' interest in learning and cultivate their critical thinking and problem-solving ability. Here are some common innovative teaching methods: case teaching: Case teaching is a method of guiding students to learn through practical cases. Teachers can choose real cases related to international economy and trade, allowing students to understand the complexity and diversity of practical problems through analysis and discussion of cases. Through case teaching, students can develop critical thinking and problem-solving ability, and apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations. Group discussion: Group discussion is a teaching method that promotes student interaction and cooperation. Teachers can divide students into small groups and have them discuss specific topics or issues. Through group discussions, students can share their own perspectives, understand others' perspectives, and jointly explore solutions. This interaction and cooperation can cultivate students' teamwork and communication skills, while also stimulating their interest in learning.

4.5 Project Driven Learning

Project driven learning is a project-based learning method where students complete practical and exploratory project tasks in a team. Through project-driven learning, students can apply theoretical knowledge to solve

practical problems, cultivate innovative thinking and practical abilities, and promote the development of teamwork and leadership skills. In addition, other innovative teaching methods can be attempted, such as role-playing, on-site investigation, virtual simulation, etc., to enrich teaching forms and stimulate students' learning interest and enthusiasm. Personalized learning support is also important. Through the tutor system, academic guidance and personalized course selection, it can meet the different learning needs of students and help them develop and grow better. This personalized learning support can enhance students' learning motivation and effectiveness, and promote their personalized development.

Improving teaching quality requires emphasizing the cultivation of practical abilities, interdisciplinary integration, organic integration of practice and theory, application of innovative teaching methods, and provision of personalized learning support in the context of the new liberal arts. These strategies can help students better adapt to the requirements of the new humanities, enhance their overall quality and competitiveness.

5. Conclusions

In today's society, in the context of the new liberal arts, it is necessary to adopt a series of strategies to improve the quality of practical teaching. This includes strengthening practical ability cultivation, interdisciplinary integration, organic integration of practice and theory, introducing innovative teaching methods, and providing personalized learning support. By continuously improving and innovating practical teaching methods, students' practical abilities can be better cultivated to enhance their competitiveness, and contribute to the development of the international economy and trade field.

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