

## **Inspiration of “Practical Training of Industrial and Commercial Market Simulation” for Teaching Reform of Vocational Colleges**

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**Abstract:** “Practical Training of Industrial and Commercial Market Simulation”, which is a large integrated practical training program for business management majors, can enable students to comprehensively practice classroom knowledge and master business and management skills required in market economy. This paper analyzes the influence of such practical training on teaching, and then puts forward several suggestions for teaching reform of business management majors in vocational colleges.

**Key words:** industrial and commercial market simulation, vocational colleges, teaching reform

**Introduction:** vocational colleges aim at training frontline practical talents for production, construction, management and social services, and require students to master basic ability and skills required in practical work of this professional field based on necessary basic theoretical knowledge and expertise. Thus, practical training programs are particularly important in teaching. In many vocational colleges, “Practical Training of Industrial and Commercial Market Simulation” is applied to practical teaching for business management and economic management majors. Through in-depth investigation of such practical training activity in several vocational colleges, the author finds that this activity has a positive influence on teaching reform of these colleges and also exposes some teaching problems.

## **1 Overview of Practical Training of Industrial and Commercial Market Simulation**

“Practical Training of Industrial and Commercial Market Simulation”, a large integrated practical training program, is to establish a real market in colleges with all teachers and students as real customers and create a real market environment for students, so that students could fully practice classroom knowledge through establishment of various enterprises and operation of diverse commodities, strengthen their market economy consciousness, cultivate a sense of competition and ability of teamwork, entrepreneurship and employment, stimulate their learning enthusiasm, exercise operating skills in a real context, and lay a solid foundation for improving employment rate and optimizing jobs.

Simulated enterprises shall often be established in classes or small teams in such practical training activity, and simulated enterprise personnel shall apply comprehensively their theoretical knowledge of business management, compete for business in a virtual enterprise context, and complete the entire process of personnel appointment, market research, enterprise registration, booth bidding, fund raising, purchasing, booth planning, decoration, formulation of marketing plans, advertising, market opening, commodity operation, business management, financial accounting, delivery of taxes as required, summary and perfection etc. This practical training really combines learning with practice, and achieves integration of teaching, learning and practice and between classrooms and training rooms.

### **2 Promotion of teaching and learning by this practical training activity**

2.1 Students practice fully theoretical knowledge and improve greatly their practical ability

This practical training, which moves market to campus for practice and simulation, helps students practice theoretical knowledge of each discipline comprehensively, and integrates effectively knowledge of disciplines including principles of economics, principles of management, corporate planning practices, marketing, corporate finance, fundamental accounting, organizational behavior,

tax practice, economic law, theory and practice of public relations, advertising principles & practice etc. Students would review previously learned knowledge, look up relevant materials and consult teachers of relevant majors to gain knowledge required in operation; they enter and know about the market, feel intuitively operation procedures of general enterprises, and have an in-depth understanding of internal business operation and marketing environment to lay a theoretical foundation for successful practice. Thus, they strengthen their understanding of expertise, and improve substantially their ability to apply knowledge, business accomplishment, entrepreneurship, employment ability, innovative spirit, teamwork ability, communication and cooperation ability.

2.2 Students strengthen their market economy consciousness and train corresponding abilities required in market economy and business management

Business management majors shall have a strong market economy consciousness and market competitiveness. Main skills that students shall master are to know, understand and develop the market and adapt to the market. However, only by really entering the market, can students really feel market rules, understand market operation rules and train their ability to exploit the market. Simulated business market allows students to learn relevant theoretical knowledge, enter and know about the market, operate independently, assume sole responsibility for profits and losses, and thus substantially improve their market competitiveness, operation and management ability, venture investment ability, organizational and planning ability, communication and coordination ability etc.

2.3 Students train their sense of competition, teamwork spirit and hardworking spirit

Competition is the core of market, but teamwork spirit is increasingly concerned by enterprises. Thus, students shall be trained to have teamwork spirit during school, so as to stand out from fierce talent competition. For college students who haven't entered the society, "Practical Training of Industrial and Commercial Market Simulation" is a test for their overall qualities, knowledge and competence, and especially an exercise for their organizational and planning

ability, sense of competition and teamwork spirit. Each team member shall do hard work including registration, organization of sources of goods, booth bidding and goods sales etc, which naturally train their abilities in competition, solidarity and cooperation, organization and planning, public relations and contact etc. Students have a lot of hardships in practical training, train their hardworking spirit and deeply understand difficulty in making money, and thus such practical training is a very good physical and psychological exercise.

2.4 Students are subjects of this practical training activity which breaks through limitations of traditional teaching

Such student-oriented practical training activity greatly mobilizes students' enthusiasm and participation, changes completely limitations of traditional teacher-oriented teaching with knowledge as the purpose, teaching as a way and examinations as the end, and carries out student-oriented teaching concepts and methods with ability as the purpose, exploration as a way and comprehensive evaluation as the result. Students could choose scope of business and partners according to their vocational interests and professional features, make clear their roles in simulated enterprises, and verify learned theories initiatively, explore knowledge they haven't learned actively, and train various required abilities by practicing the entire process of business operation and management personally. This achieves very good teaching effects, wins unanimous welcome of students, and makes up difficulty of economics and management majors in practical training. Both practical training activities have obtained ideal effects, have been reported by three provincial mainstream media, win extremely high praise of all walks of life, and gain unanimous affirmation and compliment of all teachers and students.

2.5 Strengthen the relationship between colleges and enterprises & the society to lay a foundation for further college-enterprise cooperation

Economic and social benefits of Practical Training of Industrial and Commercial Market Simulation attract a lot of enterprises, and through such industry-academy cooperation, students could cooperate with enterprises, know

closely about business philosophy, cultural atmosphere and management experience of enterprises, know about and be known by the society. Thus, a benign and interactive situation is formed to improve graduate employment and optimize jobs effectively, enhance social influence and popularity of colleges, and generate positive influence on both quantity and quality of college enrollment. Enterprises prefer students trained in this way as such students adapt more to requirements of enterprise jobs, get into jobs better and have better vocational location.

### **3 Inspiration of this practical training activity for teaching reform of business management majors in vocational colleges**

Through analysis of results of practical training activity and follow-up visit of students who participate in such an activity, the author discovers some deficiencies in teaching of business management majors.

#### 3.1 Deficiencies

##### (1) Inadequate application of expertise

In investigation, the author finds an interesting phenomenon: “Practical Training of Industrial and Commercial Market Simulation” is originally a professional integrated training and requires a variety of knowledge, each link of scheme prepared by teachers is generally very standardized and each part of practical training shall be completed by actual enterprise operation and management means; however, in actual operation, students often feel very difficult to use knowledge they have learned. On the one hand, due to limitations of venue, fund and time etc, students have small activity scale in the simulated market, and daily teaching of specialized courses is often carried out in the context of large and medium-sized enterprises; on the other hand, daily teaching of specialized courses is mainly about theories, even if there is practical training, it is about a single item and is carried out in a closed environment, so that students don’t know how to apply knowledge in a completely dynamic and open market.

With an example of market research which is the most critical link of the activity, the author has an in-depth understanding of simulated enterprises, and finds that students generally have the following problems: 1) limitation of research samples, to save costs, students usually take convenient investigation, which means investigate in their classes or dormitory buildings and almost “investigate students they meet” without pertinence, as a result, the investigation results cannot fully reflect real demand of the entire campus market; 2) incomprehensive investigation content, students often ignore suppliers and competitors in market investigation, resulting in high purchasing costs and high similarity of products; and 3) unscientific analysis of investigation results, market research is mainly to offer suggestions for decision-making, while half of enterprises in practical training investigate just in form without effective analysis of investigation data, so that merchants are blindly optimistic about products to be sold.

#### (2) Lack of training for team management ability

“Practical Training of Industrial and Commercial Market Simulation” requires students to establish simulated enterprises and operate in teams. Good teamwork is needed in order to obtain good performance in practical training. Some colleges regard such training as a course, and simulated enterprises are run by classmates or students in the same major; while some organize one-week or two-week intensive training with objects of all students.

The author finds in investigation that all approaches have a common phenomenon: team management is an important influencing factor of practical training performance. In practical training, there are a lot of team management problems that affect work performance, such as internal friction of teams, communication barriers among team members, unreasonable sense of teamwork and team structure. In simulated enterprises, nearly two third of enterprise teams consist of students from the same major or even class, and most of members share the same interests and hobbies or are good friends in daily life. Thus, team members have too similar knowledge, ability and personality, lack

complementarity, and couldn't have new ideas in practical operation, and can easily have conflicts in communication.

### (3) Inadequate training for communication skills

When the author interviews students, almost all of them regard "communication" as the biggest difficulty encountered in operation. They don't know how to bargain with suppliers while purchasing, and few simulated enterprises would agree with suppliers on after-sales services such as changing or refunding and maintenance etc; in actual sales, simulated merchants seldom sell commodities by different communication modes in front of consumers with different consumption habits; and in team management, coordination of interests among team members, common goals, coordination and communication about each link among internal departments are the biggest problems in front of students.

### 3.2 Inspiration for teaching reform of business management majors

With respect to the above deficiencies, the author puts forward the following suggestions and countermeasures:

#### (1) Enhance training of practical items in specialized course teaching

Practical Training of Industrial and Commercial Market Simulation is a large integrated practical training, and students shall apply a considerable amount of expertise involving marketing, human resource management, logistics management, financial accounting and economics etc. In daily teaching, practical training of these disciplines is carried out item by item, and some disciplines even haven't practical teaching. It is recommended that vocational colleges shall strengthen practical teaching and carry out practical training for both a single course and all courses.

#### (2) Strengthen team training in teaching

In this era of information, team becomes an increasingly important way of working along with rapid economic development. Vocational colleges mainly train applied talents, which means training students' expertise and ability to solve practical problems. Therefore, colleges shall strengthen team training for students

through collective activities, team competitions, and learning teams managed by students etc. The author has carried out attempts in teaching for many years, and divides students into several small teams in each semester of teaching, so that students complete learning, assignment and practical training in teams, which not only improves their enthusiasm, but also trains their teamwork ability.

(3) Focus on training students' communication skills in school education

Communication skills have been a focus of training when teachers are giving lessons for economics and management majors. However, teaching is mostly carried out in large classes with 50-80 students currently, so that each student has relatively less time for communication training. Thus, students' communication skills shall be trained "both inside and outside classes or campus". For example, a variety of theme class meetings, debate competitions and recreational activities can be carried out to encourage students to have team activities etc.

References:

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