

“Career Management and Experiential Education” Course Practice in Cultivating University Talents

—Based on Empirical Research by Yunnan University of Finance and Economics

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Abstract—This paper was designed to scaffold theory and methodology revolution of talents cultivation model. The empirical research confirms the idea that “Career Management and Experiential Education” Course can provide students all-around supports in life and study perspectives. It is a strong combination of theory and practice that lead students to recognize environment, know and manage them, in order to master life-long study techniques. By taking this course, students’ potential for academic and professional development has been fulfilled and maximized, so as to prepare them for future career development. In addition, the results we obtained from empirical research demonstrate that Chinese-foreign joint educational program in Yunnan Province has received great achievements. This course is of great significance in using the advanced educational resources for reference in higher institutions, recourses combination and localization, last but not the least, customized talents cultivation model for Chinese students.

Keywords—*Career Management; Experiential Education; Colleges and Universities; Talent Trainin; Empirical Research*

As development of economic globalization, alteration of family structure, changes in competitive environment, relationship among people, human and society as well as human and nature have become a determinative element, which lead to youth education and development. A clear challenge has been put forward in education field amongst severe employment pressure, method and environment: how to bring up talents that society really need?

I. CURRICULUM ORIGIN

It doesn’t really help when career when universities and colleges only provide career guidance just before graduation in the fact that society does not only need talents whose appearance are intelligent and wordly-wise, but also they should be mentally healthy and have abundant emotions, team work spirit, strong social responsibility, upward life attitude,

all-around professional knowledge system etc. However, the cultivation of these qualities cannot form overnight, but it is a long time pluralistic cultivation process. Therefore, the circular process should be built based on “intellect growth- ability training- Physical Strength-Personality Perfection-Belief Pursue”.^[1] In 2010, Yunnan University of Finance & Economics(YUFE) through the process four periods of “Brining in Trials- Integrated Implementing- Localized Development- Sustained Innovation”, the “Career Management” and “Experiential Education” combined into a six-credit course, a mode that applies to Chinese university students’ talents training has been explored.

In order to cater with the education environment and subject changes and huge talents cultivation mode innovative challenges, in 2002, YUFE brought in two core courses “Career Management” and “Experiential Education” from Keuka College, New York, US. These courses are available to students enrolled in Sino-US joint education program. YUFE started to explore localized education mode after gaining four-year practical teaching experience and learning from ideas, experiences and advanced resources of American universities. In 2008, these two courses are not only available to undergraduates but also promoted to kindergartens, elementary schools, middle schools and universities by Yunnan Provincial Department of Education.

II. NECESSITY OF CURRICULUM DESIGN

A. Basic Conception of Career Management and Experiential Education

Career Management always narrowly defines as professional career. Nevertheless, professional career is only an important stage and component part of “career”. “Career” should be coherent and integral in a broadly sense, covering the process from birth to death as human lives.^[2] Career Management education should include the reflection of

previous career, understanding of current career and future career design. Career Management education does not only emphasize how to select jobs currently, but also how to know oneself and form complete self-perception. In such circumstance, students know how to improve oneself aimly and combine current selection with middle-term and long-term goal.

Experiential Education means educator intentionally let learners enrolled in activities, which possess intuitive experience by using experiential methods. These methods should aim at enlarging knowledge, developing skills and using clear values. Experiential learning is full of vitality in that it not only requires students to study actively, but also students need to practice so that students could foresee their accomplishment.^[3] Active learning is challenging and risking. These risks are intellectually, socially and physically.

The course "Career Management and Experiential Education" in YUFE combines Career Management theory and experiential education theory. Experiential Education idea is utilized to guide Career Management. Individual career management should run through over four years in phase. Through designing a series of experiential education sectors, students' career management idea would be strengthened via intuitive experience process. Meanwhile, students should adjust his or her career plan. Therefore, students' career plans are step by step, tangible and can be felt, opposite to the abstract conception.

B. Learning Objectives and Significance

"Career Management and Experiential Education" emphasizes "learning by practicing, learning by learning, learning by playing, learning by making mistakes". This course is student centered, abiding by students developmental stages. By getting involved into perspectives of life, livelihood, emotion and society, this course helps students comprehensively understand the significance of life, existence, livelihood and career, getting to know life process, exploring lifestyles, planning career. Therefore, students could be an adaptor, competitor, and fighter and stand out, surpass himself or herself. "Career Management and Experiential Education" lays a solid foundation for students' academic accomplishment, professional career and personal growth. When students are receiving professional education, this course could support students in all perspectives such as life and study etc. This course would also lead students to recognize environment or themselves and manage themselves in order to equip the ability of lifelong learning. In such circumstance, students' potential could be maximized, ready to retrieve for future use: getting to know this whole world means that students need to have global vision and ability to communicate with different cultures and civilizations; Jumping out of the limitation of stereotype means that students could have the ability of creativity and critical thinking; knowing how to use new information means that students could have the ability of information searching, analyzing and problem solving; Having good interpersonal relationship means being gregarious.^[4]

C. Curriculum Content and Design

"Career Management and Experiential Education" course designs differently for students of different stages and grades. The whole four-year teach and study "Theoretical learning+ Experiential Practical+ Reflection" model is implemented. In total, there are 6 credits. The Part of Theoretical Learning includes 12 sections: Career Management and Experiential Learning Overview, Fundamental Theory of Career Management, Fundamental Theory of Experiential Learning, Family Experience, Community Experience, Relationship, Self-management, Cultural Experience, Caring Experience, Career Exploration, Professional Exploration and Professional Skills. The Part of Experiential Practical includes 4 sections: Family Experience, Community Experience, Caring and Non-organization Experience and Task Based Experience. Students need submit reflection report when they finished their experiential practical.

III. CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

A. Implementation Procedures

a) *Experiential Preparation.* Students need to finish correspondent theoretical learning. The instructor should not only teach students related theories, but also they should train students how to utilize 5W2H1E, namely why, what, who, when, where, how, how much, effect to complete experience. After students have finished self-assessment, experiential venues can be chosen based on practical issues and students can submit to review by experiential career center. After review is approved, students should get to know as much knowledge as possible including their expectation and main task. With the help of instructors, students could develop their own challenging, clear, detailed, examinable learning goal.

b) *Experiential Process.* Experiential center assigned teachers as students' advisors. Students observe and reflect via seeing, thinking, recording, combining and experiment. Advisors would keep track of students' process by giving a phone call or field trip.

c) *Experiential Ending.* Students' work would be assessed and students should submit report and certified documents. Instructors would grade students by their class discussion, experiential preparation, progressive check, Host Company and related staff's comments, certified documents and students' report. After the grading is finished, teacher would give students some feedbacks regarding their performance during the whole process.

B. Set Up Teaching Organization and Team

YUFE sets up experiential career teaching center for the very purpose, in charging of the course teaching, research and management. This course uses team teaching based on the characters of each theme. Instructors from different fields would teach exerting their own expertise. Students' active participation would improve and instructors' professional advantages would be shown.

C. Set Up Experiential Education Sites

An experiential education base that has clear layers and various abundant contents is significant for the course “Career Management and Experiential Education”. Participation Capabilities Shaping Experiential Base, Volunteer Activities Experiential Base, Non-profit Organization Base and Profit Organization etc. are designed with respect to teaching progress, content, and grades in practical situation. According to whole four-year teaching plan, students would experience activities in different experiential bases so as to learn with much more clear purpose and improve teaching effectiveness.

IV. CONCLUSION

We are always thinking: What is the function of educators? What is the purpose for students to study? Which is more important, theoretical knowledge or practice? What talents does the society need? If we think as a student, what should we learn and how? More often than not, we accuse students of not studying hard and do not learn following teachers’ instructions. Some schools feel proud that they have students who got higher scores in National College Entrance Examination. However, when students apply for a job, they always complain that the company is demanding and feel it is hard to be all-rounded. A student who does not know career process, Career Management, moral certainty and combine learning with practice would be refused by employers no matter where. In this competitive age, we pay more attention on helping students

get to know the environment, get to know themselves, helping students know career, adjust career and plan career. We help students understand living, life, survival and career, helping students manage time, money, pressure, relationship and moral aspirations. The purpose of learning is to harvest knowledge. And the final aim of knowledge is to use, the purpose to cultivate students is to “Answer questions, solve problems and impart knowledge”. Answer questions and solve problems is to teach knowledge, and imparting knowledge is to teach practical knowledge, giving student the skill and ability. There are a lot of ways to help students, but helping students to learn the way of studying are two: the first one is to learn with agony, the second one is to learn happily. As a conscious educator, we would not let students to learn painfully but to enjoy learning, letting students become outstanding and surpass themselves.

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