On the Course Design for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education
Basic Courses in Colleges and Universities

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Keywords: Innovation and entrepreneurship education; Basic course; Quality-oriented education.

Abstract. With the slogan “Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation” trending, the key task for colleges and universities has shifted from exploring and practice to designing innovation and entrepreneurship basic courses properly. In this paper, five aspects regarding course design, namely designing direction, key teaching points, teaching methods, teaching components and demands on teachers are discussed, demonstrating that the emphasis and core of entrepreneurship and innovation basic course design is education on qualities and abilities. Hence, we should integrate the theory of constructivism into the systematical design of teaching contents from four aspects, namely context, cooperation, dialogue and meaning construction. Classified teaching with students as the subject should be applied, so that the various teaching methods used can help satisfy the demands of different student groups.

Introduction

In the fundamental task of comprehensively composing morals and cultivating talents,[1] The Thirteenth Five Year Plan on Developing National Education issued by the state council in January, 2017 emphasized that higher education institutions should cultivate students’ mindset and ability of innovation and entrepreneurship, build platforms serving their innovation and entrepreneurship practices and improve related course system and management system. They should also motivate students to participate in innovation and entrepreneurship activities and competitions, so as to cultivate the campus culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Meanwhile, The General Office of State Council’s Opinions on Deepening Reform on Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education of Higher Education Institutions proposed the guiding ideology on innovation and entrepreneurship education, namely quality-oriented education as the theme, improving talent quality as the core, innovative talent cultivation mechanism as the key point and sound conditions and policy guarantee as the cornerstone.[2] As for the major tasks: The course system for innovation and entrepreneurship education should be improved, so as to open compulsory and optional courses regarding research methods, cutting-edge knowledge, entrepreneurial basis, occupational and entrepreneurial guidance, etc., and fit them into the overall credit management system; teaching and evaluation methods should be improved, and that include engaging in wide-range heuristic, discussion-based and participative teaching, expanding the coverage of small-class teaching, motivating teachers to integrate cutting-edge international academic achievements, researching outcomes and practices into their classroom teaching, emphasizing the cultivation of students’ critical and creative thinking and inspiring their innovation and entrepreneurship practices; students’ abilities to analyze and solve problems with the knowledge acquired should be fully examined, so as to explore the field of non-standardized test and solve the long-standing problem of “high scores but low abilities”. [2] Also in the file some realistic problems facing colleges and universities in innovation and entrepreneurship education are mentioned, namely the inconformity between educational ideology and professional education, teachers’ lack of conscious and ability to engage in innovation and entrepreneurship education, not well-targeted and inefficient teaching contents, etc.
Basic courses are the basis and starting point for many colleges and universities in their practices in deepening innovation and entrepreneurship education. Well-designed innovation and entrepreneurship basic courses can serve as the perfect guidebook and effective demonstration when opening compulsory and optional courses for all students.

**Direction in Designing Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education and Teaching Targets**

A clear target list is the precondition for designing basic courses of innovation and entrepreneurship education. The guiding principle of *quality-oriented education as the theme, improving talent quality as the core, innovative talent cultivation mechanism as the key point and sound conditions and policy guarantee as the cornerstone* should be adhered to. And that requires us to put the cultivation of students’ abilities and qualities high on the agenda of setting teaching goals. The improvement of students’ abilities and qualities should as well be at the core of teaching assessment. Traditional teaching regards teaching knowledge as the main goal and cram teaching that focuses on entrepreneurship guidance are the two traps we need to avoid. The former is more about the theoretical research on entrepreneurial phenomenon, emphasizing theoretical progresses and ignoring cultivation on students’ creative mindset and innovating and entrepreneurial ability; while the latter focuses on analyzing the logics and principles of the project and discussing how to promote the project successfully, and relatively weakens the essence of cultivating talent.

Hence, while designing courses, one should be properly understanding and utilizing the fundamental theories of innovation and entrepreneurship. Then these theories should be used to improve students’ comprehensive abilities and qualities, help them to focus on learning and lay basis for their career development and occupational and entrepreneurial practices.

**Key Points and Tradeoffs in Basic Course Teaching of Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

**Quality Education**

Since the 1980s, entrepreneurship education has gradually become a new branch of management studies in western countries, and a compulsory course for MBA students. In some famous schools, majors and departments are even established, contributing to its vast knowledge system. As the basic courses for innovation and entrepreneurship education, liberal education has the cultivation of abilities and qualities as its goal. However, due to time limitation, key points and tradeoffs must be clear in designing teaching when faced with groups with different demands.

The key is to inspire and motivate students to innovate, equip them with devices and teach them the rules and knowledge of entrepreneurship. Also certain teaching methods should be used to enlighten them to try and have in-depth thinking on the factors in entrepreneurship. For different groups of students, practical knowledge that suits them best should be emphasized while theoretical knowledge as expanding contents should not take too much time. Problem-oriented mindset should also be emphasized to cultivate students’ ability and mindset to explore, analyze and solve problems with the practical knowledge, methods and rules they have learned. Also this can guide students to utilize what they have learned in their personality molding, professional study, career development and life planning.

**Relationship between Teaching Methods and Teaching Effectiveness in Innovation and Entrepreneurship Basic Education**

With cultivating talents as the key task, innovation and entrepreneurship education has its foundation as its basic courses. Hence, the courses should display characteristics of quality-oriented education and liberal education fully. Constructive learning theory can be followed during the design procedure, as it holds that knowledge is not gained from teachers, but by meaning construction procedure jointed by some certain factors including certain social and cultural context, help from teachers and mates and necessary learning materials. Study is the meaning construction procedure realized through help from others, namely interpersonal cooperation under certain social
and cultural context. Hence, the theory considers context, cooperation, conversation and meaning construction as the four key factors in learning environment.[3]

Hence, what needs to be firstly addressed in the teaching method design of innovation and entrepreneurship basic course is teaching context. Teachers should demonstrate various scenarios including social realities, industrial features, professional backgrounds and economic trends, so that students can learn under professional background as well as economic and cultural background, including traditional culture, social realities and core values. And by so, innovation and entrepreneurship education can integrate with professional education, ideological and political education as well as the social demand. Secondly, the one-fold relationship between teachers and students needs to be updated to the coordinated indoor and outdoor group relationship, with students as the main body and teachers as the leaders, so that students can step outside the classroom and engage in the society. Thirdly, team education management pattern, which emphasizes communication, interactions, research and discussion and sharing, needs to be established, so that students can improve their comprehensive strength as they absorb and expand their knowledge. Fourthly, with teachers’ guidance, students can learn innovative strategies, understand startup knowledge and rules, as well as their applications for now and in the future. Hence we can tell that, among frequently-used methods, Flipped Classes and experience-oriented teaching can facilitate teachers in designing teaching scenes, heuristic and interactive teaching can boost cooperation, and discussion-oriented and participative teaching can demonstrate conversation. Also, the teasing, concluding and refining of all these processes by the teachers help in constructing meaning and internalizing knowledge.

The key components of these basic courses are highly interconnected. While designing, teachers should use the knowledge map to demonstrate the logical and systematical relationship among these factors. With regards to business model, the background should be recognized entrepreneurial opportunity and certain recognition and control over the risk. While analyzing a business model, teachers should demonstrate the way to innovate in the components and their combination, and motivate students to consider the project basis, and the resources and team needed for innovating business model.

By flexibly using constructivism learning theory in designing the teaching targets and key components of innovation and entrepreneurship basic courses, various teaching methods including video, Flipped Classes, experience-based, information-based and interactive teaching can all be fully used. Students can hence be the subject and teachers can be the leaders. All these follow the rules and principle of education and growth of talents, enrich teaching patterns, liven up the teaching atmosphere and help boost students’ enthusiasm and passion in innovation and entrepreneurship. These all further lay the concrete foundation for ensuring teaching effectiveness.

**Demand of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Basic Course Design on Teachers**

For both professional and non-professional teachers, designing basic courses for innovation and entrepreneurship remains quite a challenge. And that poses higher demands for teachers, as only in this way can the entrepreneurship and innovation education integrate into the cultivation mechanism and boost the comprehensive reform of the school. Firstly, teachers have to deepen their understanding on the fundamental teaching task of “composing morals and cultivating talents”, and improve the standard of quality-oriented education and talent cultivation. Secondly, teachers should be able to systematically design courses by dynamically combining basic teaching with various factors including social needs, professional teaching, thinking training, career planning and personality shaping. Thirdly, teachers should be well aware of what students might be in need of. They should also impose specified teaching on those who lack the awareness of innovation and entrepreneurship or are unwilling to do so, so that students could utilize what has been learned to make better career and life choices. Fourthly, teachers should be able to control teaching activities. The utilization of multiple teaching methods and principles sheds new light on traditional teaching model, which will inspire students and distract them to some extent. That’s when teachers come in and lead students back to the theme. Fifthly, teaching should be capable of organizing teaching.
resources. "Mass entrepreneurship and innovation" is already the label defining the era, demanding teaching resources to be contemporary, timely and stylish. We are now living in an era of booming knowledge, flowing information and ever-changing science and technology. Hence, all cases, courseware, videos and homework must be updated timely, so as to satisfy modern college students and motivate them to study. Sixthly, teachers should be with critical thinking and learning ability, as innovation and entrepreneurship are, in the nature, exploring and challenging the unknown. To students, teachers are guiders, blazers, assistors and escorts of innovation and entrepreneurship education, rather than just instructors.

“Propagating the doctrine, imparting professional knowledge and resolving doubts” is the sacred mission and austere task given by ancient philosophers to all the teachers. Also it serves as the touchstone for teachers’ performance and efficiency in the education of entrepreneurship and innovation. It is quite hard to be a good teacher, but it’s more daunting a task to be one good at teaching innovation and entrepreneurship, as that requires one to design delicate core courses, fulfill and perfect them.

References

