

Experiments of the Integration of Professional Courses and Innovative and Entrepreneurship Courses: Taking Law Major as an Example

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education aims at cultivating talents with basic entrepreneurial qualities and creative personality. This is not only reflected in the entrepreneurship courses, but also in the professional courses. The phenomenon of “two skins” between the entrepreneurship and professional courses is presented in the current higher education. It is against the characteristics of entrepreneurship courses of being practical, comprehensive, and responsive and affects the teaching effect of entrepreneurship courses. Through the establishment of integration experiments between professional and entrepreneurial courses, this article aims to promote entrepreneurial awareness, entrepreneurial spirit, and entrepreneurial skills throughout the entire curriculum.

Key words: Professional course; Entrepreneurship courses; Education of law

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1. THE PROMINENT PROBLEMS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Entrepreneurship education aims at cultivating talents with basic entrepreneurial qualities and creative personality. This is not only reflected in the entrepreneurship courses,

but also in the professional courses. Entrepreneurship education should be implemented through students' entire university years and cultivate their entrepreneurial awareness, entrepreneurial spirit and entrepreneurial ability. The phenomenon of “two skins” between the entrepreneurship and professional courses is presented in the current higher education. It is against the characteristics of entrepreneurship courses of being practical, comprehensive, and responsive and affects the teaching effect of entrepreneurship courses. In June 2016, the Ministry of Education held a video conference on “Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education Reform in Higher Education”. The head of the Ministry of Education emphasized: “We must firmly establish the concept of advanced innovative and entrepreneurship education, and strive to achieve the organic integration of innovative and entrepreneurship education and professional education.” The prominent problems in the current entrepreneurship and professional courses are mainly as follows:

1.1 Contradiction Between the Comprehensive Course of Entrepreneurship and Teaching Professional Courses as a Class

The existing entrepreneurship education is based on professional classes, and the professional background of the students in a startup class is assimilated, their knowledge structures overlap, and their thinking logics are very similar. This is in serious contradiction with the entrepreneurial team building principle of “creating talents” and “professional collaboration”. Both the business plan and the entrepreneurial practice are highly integrated, and students from all majors need to take advantage of their strengths and give their maximum efforts.

1.2 Contradiction Between the Practicality of Entrepreneurship Education and the Theoreticality of Professional Education

The content of the entrepreneurship course is extensive

and highly practical and technical. Teachers and students need to have not only profound professional knowledge, but also plenty of social experience and professional concepts. However, the existing professional courses are mostly based on theoretical study, and introduce and comment on the current theories and doctrines from the aspects of definition and nature. The teaching philosophies of the two educations are seriously disconnected. Some professional teachers think they are the “regular troops”, and the entrepreneurial class is just a “guerrilla team”. Some students think that the entrepreneurial class is a waste of time and energy.

1.3 Contradiction Between the Examination Method of Entrepreneurship Course and Professional Course

The existing entrepreneurship courses use “project display” as the main method of assessment, focusing on the concept of class participation and process assessment. However, the examinations of professional courses focus on the final exams, and the examination methods are mainly closed-book, reciting, and answering questions. There is a big difference between the two methods of assessment. Some students take a free ride in the entrepreneurial courses. They are inactive in group projects and use the results done by other students to complete the course assessment. Although there are professional practice courses in the professional curriculum, it is unsystematic and unprofessional. It is basically a classroom discussion, which makes it difficult for students to get out of the classroom and practice.

2. IMPORTANCE OF THE INTEGRATION BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL COURSES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP COURSES

One of the important functions of the university is to promote the integration of innovative and entrepreneurship education and professional education, adapt to the needs of economic and social development, and be in line with the law of talent cultivation. From the perspective of economic and social development, the organic integration of the two educations can lead to the coupling of innovative and entrepreneurial knowledge and professional knowledge and form a situation of innovation and entrepreneurship by professional knowledge so that professional knowledge can be more directly and efficiently integrated into social production practice and transformed into the driving force of economic and social development. From the perspective of talent cultivation, the organic integration of the two educations is conducive to the overall development of college students, especially to the establishment of innovative spirit and accumulation

of human capital. The establishment of cross-disciplinary cross-curricular courses in innovative and entrepreneurship education has strengthened the practice of innovation and entrepreneurship, and is conducive to the transformation of talents from single-disciplinary to multidisciplinary and to improving the ability of college students. From the perspective of university function, the organic integration of the two educations is a concentrated expression of the university’s service social function, which is conducive to promoting academic knowledge toward the market and society, and integrating the production, dissemination, and application of academic knowledge with economic and social development.

2.1 Promoting the Coordinated Development of Professional Courses and Entrepreneurship Courses With the Goal of “Improving the Comprehensive Quality of Talents”

Professional education and innovative and entrepreneurship education are not contradictory and should be unified with the goal of “improving the comprehensive quality of talents”. The two should not be ‘two skins’, but rather two aspects of college education. It is necessary to solve the problem of ‘two skins’ from the roots of “how” and “what”, to implement the top-level design of talent cultivation, to avoid only solving the most apparent issues, and to integrate entrepreneurship in professional courses through programs such as “embedded professional courses” and “job entrepreneurship”, turn the “two skins” of innovative and entrepreneurship education and professional education into “one strand”, and achieve a harmonious relationship.

2.2 Taking “Innovative and Entrepreneurship Education” as the Opportunity to Deepen the Comprehensive Reform of Higher Education

On May 13, 2015, the General Office of the State Council issued the “Implementation Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Innovative and Entrepreneurship Education in Colleges and Universities” (hereinafter referred to as “Implementation Opinions”), and comprehensively deployed and deepened the reform of innovative and entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities. The “Implementation Opinions” does not simply encourage the initiation an entrepreneurship movement among college students; instead, it regards innovative and entrepreneurship education as an urgent need for the country to implement an innovation-driven developing strategy and promote economic quality improvement and efficiency upgrading, and is an important measure to promote comprehensive reform of higher education and promote higher quality entrepreneurship for students. It is a breakthrough in deepening the comprehensive reform of higher education.

3. PROFESSIONAL COURSES AND INNOVATIVE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP COURSES ARE DISCONNECTED

3.1 Disconnection Between Professional Courses and Innovation and Entrepreneurship Courses

Under the national policy of “mass entrepreneurship and innovation”, domestic universities continue to promote innovative and entrepreneurship education. Although there are achievements, there are still problems that cannot be ignored. Among them, the obvious disconnection between professional courses and entrepreneurship courses is one of the problems. Under the guidance of subject evaluation and performance appraisal, the education of higher education institutions still only has the “regular army” of professional education to promote, while the innovative and entrepreneurship education is like “guerrillas”. Although some teachers try to integrate innovative and entrepreneurship education into daily teaching, professional education and innovative and entrepreneurship education have become “two skins” because there is no established curriculum planning. This problem is mainly manifested in:

3.1.1 Disconnection Between Teaching-Oriented Professional Courses and Practical Entrepreneurial Courses

Innovative entrepreneurship education is a hands-on practice, not “working behind closed doors”. It is a practical training, not knowledge instillation. At present, many colleges and universities have thought that innovative and entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial skills and knowledge are the same thing, and the path is too narrow, leading to low recognition of entrepreneurship education. Many corporate executives have said that “all teachers teach the students in the same way, and ultimately students can’t start a business.”

3.1.2 Disconnection Between Professional Practice Class and Entrepreneurial Class

With the continuous deepening of education reform in higher education institutions and the continuous advancement of the construction of applied universities, our school has also opened professional practice courses, such as economic law labs. However, the practical platforms are lacking, and the guidance and assistance are not sufficient. Most of them are only in-class discussions and case studies, and they are not really integrated into practice. In the education and practice of entrepreneurship, there will be a large number of legal issues, financial problems, marketing problems, etc. These are the vivid themes of professional practice classes. Both classes have their own needs, but they are seriously disconnected.

3.1.3 Disconnection Between Professional Education and the Educational Concept of Entrepreneurship

In the traditional professional course teaching, professionalism is the guidance of cultivating talents, and students are trained to become highly professional lawyers and accountants through university education. Even some professional teachers, clearly stated that the students are professional elite, but they are not suitable for starting a business. Entrepreneurship education covers a wide range, including not only self-employment, but also post entrepreneurship. In the professional education, we should also implement the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship.

3.2 Main Causes of the Disconnection Between Professional Courses and Innovative and Entrepreneurship Courses

3.2.1 Concept of Innovative and Entrepreneurship Teaching Is Not Clear Enough

Some localities and universities pay less attention to it. The concept of innovative and entrepreneurship education lags behind, and it is not tightly integrated with professional education is disconnected with practice. Entrepreneurship education does not simply encourage the initiation of the entrepreneurship movement among college students, but regards innovative and entrepreneurship education as an opportunity in deepening the comprehensive reform of higher education. In daily teaching, we should strengthen the leading and responsiveness of entrepreneurship education and increase the concept of “job entrepreneurship”.

3.2.2 Traditional Teaching Settings Do Not Meet the Needs of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The existing entrepreneurship class teaching is based on professional classes, and the professional background of the students in a startup class is assimilated, their knowledge structures overlap, and their ways of thinking are very similar. This is in serious contradiction with the principle of “creating talents” and “professional collaboration”. Entrepreneurship courses are generally offered in the third year as a practical course, and the 16-week teaching arrangement is not conducive to the staged and systematic nature of entrepreneurial practice.

3.2.3 Guidance of Innovation and Entrepreneurship by Professional Teachers Are Insufficient

Some professional teachers position teaching as professional education, which is not suitable for starting a business and some even think that starting a business is a waste of time. It is better to take a practice exam and participate in a professional internship. Although some teachers try to integrate innovative and entrepreneurship education into daily teaching, professional education and innovative and entrepreneurship education have become “two skins” because there is no established curriculum planning.

4. EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN ANALYSIS OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN INNOVATIVE COURSES AND PROFESSIONAL COURSES

4.1 Experimental Design of Professional Courses and Innovative and Entrepreneurship Courses

In the design of this teaching experiment, an economic law experiment class in the direction of the law major economic law and a class of the entrepreneurial foundation course are selected as the experimental subjects. The total number of students of the two classes is 30, and all of them are junior.

Experiment #1: Integrating professional practice courses with entrepreneurship courses

The legal problems encountered in the entrepreneurial practice of students in the entrepreneurship class are collected into cases for the economic law experiment class. The complaints and judgments in the economic law experiment class are used as the teaching materials for the entrepreneurship course.

Experiment #2: Implement professional lab throughout the entrepreneurial activities

There are 30 students in the Economic Law Experimental Class, and 15 groups of two can be formed. Integrating with the newly opened entrepreneurship course this semester, these 15 groups can serve as the legal advisors for 15 groups in the entrepreneurship class and answer their legal questions of startups at any time.

Experiment #3: Entrepreneurial talent class chooses professional courses independently based on entrepreneurship

I suggest setting up an entrepreneurial college or an entrepreneurial talent class to allow the students to choose their own professional courses according to their needs.

4.2 Experimental Design Analysis of the Integration Between Professional Courses and Innovative and Entrepreneurship Courses

According to the experimental results, the feasibility and effects of experiments are analyzed. First, the effect of the case sharing mechanism between the professional class and the experimental class should be analyzed; secondly, the feasibility and effects of students formed legal consultant on entrepreneurial projects should be analyzed; lastly, the feasibility and effect of independently selections of the professional course by students of the entrepreneurial class should be analyzed.

5. SUGGESTIONS ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE INTEGRATING MECHANISM BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL COURSES AND INNOVATIVE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP COURSES

5.1 Improve the Curriculum System of Innovative and Entrepreneurship Education

According to the requirements of talent training and innovative and entrepreneurship education, we should promote the organic integration of professional education and innovative and entrepreneurship education, adjust the professional curriculum, explore and enrich the innovative and entrepreneurial education resources of various professional courses, and strengthen the innovative and entrepreneurship education during the process of imparting professional knowledge. We should actively expand the in-school activities and projects and construct students' practical project system based on interest, type, and direction. We should revise the professional training programs, embody the ability of innovation and entrepreneurship in the objectives of training talents and the graduation requirements of students, and require each major to set at least one compulsory course of innovative and entrepreneurship education and one course of innovative and entrepreneurship practice in the curriculum system. Each student will be required to take at least one innovative and entrepreneurship course as the general elective. For the third and fourth year of college, the "Entrepreneurship Management Module" will be set up to cultivate students' entrepreneurial awareness and ability. We should improve the management system of student status and credits. Students who take the "Entrepreneurial Management Module" course and participate in entrepreneurial practice activities can replace the relevant course credits after passing the examination. Taking technological innovation activities or competitions as the topic of the projects, one or several instructors should be assigned to each project. Inter-disciplinary projects participated with teachers and students can adopt the mode of guiding by teachers and developing by students. The teachers should promote students to deepen the real project research. Together they will establish the reasonable and relatively stable structure of "professional instructors + business mentors + entrepreneurial tutor". We should also guide the faculty team to select students who have outstanding performance in various activities and projects and provide intensive training for students with certain potentials to improve the flexibility and pertinence of students' innovative and entrepreneurship education and professional guidance.

5.2 Reform Teaching and Assessment Methods

All colleges and universities should carry out more heuristic learning that encourages discussions and participations of students, expand the education coverage of small class, promote teachers to integrate international cutting-edge academic development and latest research results and practical experience into classroom teaching, reform the content and methods of examinations, focus on examining students' ability to use knowledge to analyze and solve problems, explore exams with non-standard answers, and break the "high scores and few ability". We should construct a platform that is conducive to the integration of innovative and entrepreneurship education into professional education and make reasonable resource allocation. We should fully integrate the resources of the school, carry out institutional reforms for an effective combination of innovative and entrepreneurship education and professional education, and establish a coordination mechanism for the integration of innovative and entrepreneurship education and professional education. We should build internal and external training bases in the way of professional resources are shared so that its advantages will be further developed, and the innovative and entrepreneurial education functions on the basis of professional education will be further enriched and expanded.

5.3 Reform Teaching and Student Status Management System

All colleges and universities should set up reasonable credits for innovative and entrepreneurship courses, establish a system of accumulation and transformation of innovative and entrepreneurship course credits, explore ways to convert students' innovative experiments, papers, patents, and self-employment into credits, and recognize students' participation in research projects and experiments as classroom learning. Priority should be given to students who participate in innovation and entrepreneurship for opportunities of joining relevant professional studies. We should make the studies of process specification, management system, incentive system, and other systems as the first lesson of new students, guide students to

develop good study habits and mental state, form a conscious standard in professional learning and innovative entrepreneurial activities. Based on the situation of the school and combined with professional characteristics, with the systemic and continuous activities as the carrier, we will make the innovative and entrepreneurial culture ecology suitable for our school and demonstrate the role of cultural soft environment in talent cultivation.

China should establish a joint mechanism between professional courses and entrepreneurship courses as soon as possible. In the professional courses, we implement the concept of innovative and entrepreneurship education that is scientifically advanced, widely recognized, and has Chinese characteristics. By 2020, we will establish a system of innovative and entrepreneurial education in colleges and universities, integrating classroom teaching, independent learning, combining practice, guiding assistance, and cultural leadership. The quality of personnel training will be significantly improved, and students' innovative spirits, entrepreneurial awareness, and innovative entrepreneurship will be significantly enhanced. The number of students who have committed themselves to entrepreneurial practice will increase significantly.

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