

Received: January 15, 2017

Revision received: August 5, 2018

Accepted: August 7, 2018

Copyright © 2018 ESTP

www.estp.com.tr

DOI 10.12738/estp.2018.6.176 • December 2018 • 18(6) • 2759-2765

Research Article

Application of Project-based Teaching in the Tourism Marketing Course

Yan Mei¹

Chengdu University of Technology

Yuling Hu²

Chengdu University of Technology

Abstract

curriculum construction is the core link in the cultivation of talents' quality and professionalism in colleges and universities. The project-based teaching adopts the method of "taking students as the main body, project as the main line and teacher as the guide", which is in line with the requirements of the current curriculum reform. This teaching method is applicable to the tourism marketing course featuring highly theoretical and comprehensive nature. In this paper, the application of project-based teaching in tourism marketing course was discussed from four aspects, namely the project task selection, project planning, project task implementation and project achievement evaluation, in order to improve the teaching method and effectiveness of the course.

Keywords

Project-Based Teaching • Curriculum Construction • Tourism Marketing

¹Correspondence to: Yan Mei, Chengdu University of Technology, Chengdu 610059, China. Email: 445301483@qq.com

² Chengdu University of Technology, Chengdu 610059, China. Email: 875316516@qq.com

Curriculum construction is the core link in the cultivation of talents' quality and professional ability in colleges and universities. However, it is now a shortcoming, bottleneck and key issue for Chinese universities. In August 2018, the Ministry of Education issued the "*Notice on Implementing the Spirit of the Undergraduate Education Work Conference of the National Higher Education Institutions in the New Era*", requiring all colleges and universities to focus on undergraduate education, eliminate "low-quality courses" and create "premium courses". How to build a profound, difficult and challenging "premium course" has become the focus and hot issue in the study and practice of undergraduate education in China. The transformation of teaching methods is an important part of curriculum reform, as well as the core link to create a "premium course". Based on the advanced constructivist learning theory, the project-based teaching adopts the method of "taking students as the main body, project as the main line and teacher as the guide", which changes the traditional model of passive knowledge acceptance by students and conforms to the requirements of today's curriculum reform.

Project-based teaching, also called project teaching or project-based learning, refers to the teaching activities involving the joint implementation of a complete project by teachers and students. The purpose is to organically combine curriculum theory and practical education in teaching to fully discover the creative potential of students and improve their ability to solve practical problems. The project-based teaching originated from the theory of education through labor in Europe, initially took shape as the European reformative work-study education in the 18th century and the U.S. cooperative education in the 19th century, and became increasingly mature in the middle and late 20th century. Later, it has gained more and more attention from the education circles of various countries, especially the vocational education circle. As a new teaching approach, the project teaching has been widely concerned in China's higher vocational education, but it is still rare in the applied research on undergraduate education. In line with the characteristics of colleges and universities and the author's many years of practical teaching experience, this paper applied the project-based teaching to the reform of tourism marketing course, in order to "reasonably increase the course difficulty, expand the course depth, and effectively improve the course quality" to cultivate students' innovative spirit and practical ability (Wang *et al.*, 2012).

Necessity of Application of Project-based Teaching in the Tourism Marketing Course

Problems of Practical Teaching of Tourism Marketing Course

Tourism management is a first-level discipline under management, as well as a highly practice-oriented major. Applied undergraduate majors aim to cultivate talents with theoretical basis and applied skills, a model between research-oriented undergraduate education and vocational skills-oriented education. Therefore, higher requirements are put forward for the teaching of professional courses. Teachers are required not only to impart theoretical knowledge, but more importantly, to closely integrate the actual dynamics of the industry to cultivate and improve students' innovative spirit and practical ability (Feng *et al.*, 2017). Tourism marketing is a basic professional course for undergraduate majors in tourism management. It is a branch of marketing and a highly professional, practical and comprehensive course. Through the course, students can master the basic

professional knowledge of tourism marketing, with strong tourism marketing planning and practical ability, so as to lay a solid foundation for entering the society in the future. Therefore, from the nature of the course, in order to achieve the above-mentioned teaching objectives and tasks, it is required that the course teaching should take the theory as the guidance, focus on the industry practice, and integrate “teaching, learning, and practice”.

At present, the "Tourism Marketing" course is mostly in the traditional teaching mode that imparts knowledge to students in the classroom with teachers as the center. This approach allows students to learn systematic and solid professional knowledge (Zong and Li, 2013). However, this "instilling" teaching method has hampered the students' initiative and creative development and easily reduced the interest of most students in the course. At the same time, students, due to little social experience and practice, have to make great efforts to understand the pure theory in teaching and can hardly apply theoretical knowledge to practice, which is not conducive to the development of students' comprehensive ability. Therefore, the traditional teaching mode lowers the teaching quality of the tourism marketing course and cannot meet the training requirements of the applied talents in tourism management.

Role of Project-based Teaching for Tourism Marketing Course

Project-based teaching is an approach to interact teaching and learning with projects as the carrier. Significantly different from the traditional teaching approach, the project-based teaching has realized three shifts, that is, the shift from teacher-centered to the student-centered, the shift from the textbook-centered to the project-centered, and the shift from the classroom-centered to practice-centered.

Give Play to Students' Initiative in Learning. In the process of completing the project tasks, students need to devote themselves to teaching activities, which changes the way of passively accepting knowledge in the past, and stimulates the initiative and creativity of learning. Students can autonomously construct, understand and integrate tourism marketing knowledge and take appropriate and correct theories and means to finally solve the practical problems with knowledge.

Cultivate Comprehensive Application-oriented Talents. Tourism marketing involves many other disciplines, such as consumer behaviors, economics, management, etc. In the case of project-based teaching, if students want to successfully complete the project tasks, the knowledge of tourism marketing alone cannot solve all the problems. It is necessary to integrate the knowledge of multiple disciplines to complete the overall project tasks together. Through the integration of multidisciplinary knowledge, students can learn in different fields, and at the same time improve their ability to solve problems and think independently. In addition, students, in the process of completing project tasks, can also exercise the comprehensive ability to solve practical problems, such as the ability to collect information, the ability to explore and analyze, the ability to communicate and cooperate, and the ability to report and express (Zhang *et al.*, 2012).

Application of Project-based Teaching in the Tourism Marketing Course

In the first lesson of the course, the teacher needs to elaborate on the arrangement of the project teaching, so that students can understand the organizing form and implementation significance of this teaching method. Combined with previous studies, project-based teaching can be carried out in four steps: project task selection, project planning, project task implementation, and project achievement evaluation.

Project Task Selection

The determination of the project task is the first step of project-based teaching, and is the key link to determine the success or failure of the project. The selection of project tasks should be based on the teaching objectives of this course and the realization of students' knowledge goals, ability goals, and quality goals. Tourism marketing is a highly integrated discipline with many knowledge points, so a single project task cannot meet the teaching objectives. Therefore, in the actual teaching, the author transforms the knowledge system of this course into the four major project task modules of tourism market environment analysis, tourism market strategy, tourism marketing strategy and tourism marketing management. Each project task module has specific and clear sub-projects. Combined with the procedures of tourism marketing, the project tasks of this course are gradually completed in line with priorities with the development of teaching activities (as shown in Table 1).

Table 1

Combination of Tourism Marketing Theory and Project Tasks—An Example of Chengdu

Knowledge module	Theoretical knowledge	Project task
A. Tourism market environment analysis	A1. Tourism market environment analysis, SWOT analysis model	Analyze the tourism market environment in Chengdu
	A2. Tourism market survey	Analyze the tourist characteristics, tourism needs and satisfaction for Chengdu
	A3. Analysis of tourism consumer behaviors	Analysis of the purchasing psychology and process of certain types of tourists in Chengdu
B. Tourism market strategy	B1. Tourism market breakdown	
	B2. Tourism target market selection	Chengdu tourism market selection and market positioning research
	B3. Tourism market positioning	
C. Tourism marketing strategy	C1. Tourism product strategy	Chengdu tourism product planning
	C2. Tourism price strategy	Pricing Analysis of Chengdu Scenic Spots
	C3. Tourism marketing channel strategy	Chengdu tourism sales channel planning
	C4. Tourism promotion strategy	Chengdu tourism promotion planning
	C5. Tourism innovative marketing strategy	Chengdu tourism marketing strategy via new media
D. Tourism marketing management	D1. Tourism marketing organization	Chengdu tourism marketing implementation plan formulation
	D2. Tourism marketing planning	
	D3. Tourism marketing control	

In order to better integrate the course content and the tourism industry practice, the author required students to choose a certain tourism enterprise or tourist destination as the research object in the practice teaching, and

the research object cannot be changed for the continuity of the sub-project research. After the completion of each sub-project, the overall marketing plan for the research object was put forward.

The research object can be selected in line with the research projects of teachers, the students' science and technology projects, or localized and time-sensitive materials that are familiar to the students. For example, in order to increase the "practicality" of project teaching, based on my ongoing research project "Tourism Planning for Dachengdu International Tourism Destinations", Chengdu, where the university is located, was selected as one of the researches to be the place to implement the teaching tasks of this course.

Project Planning

After the project theme is determined, the implementation plan of the project should be formulated with the staffing schedule and time requirements set. The first is to group students. Students group themselves by will and then teachers make appropriate adjustments for complementary advantages. Each group has four students including one group leader and then determine the research object of the project. Finally, under the guidance of the teacher, the group leader arranges a roughly equal amount of work for each member to ensure a reasonable division of labor among the team members and effectively avoid the phenomenon of "free rider".

Meanwhile, the teacher should give a detailed explanation of the project, so that students should understand the purpose and significance of the project's mission, and the specified time for project completion with certain effects. All project teams are required to implement the project plan in a phased and step-by-step manner ([Askar and Davenport, 2009](#)).

Project Task Implementation

In order to ensure that students can understand and master the theory of tourism marketing to meet the "application-based undergraduate" requirements, the implementation process of the project must be combined with the chapters of the course in the project-based teaching. The implementation of the project task first requires the teacher to teach the theoretical knowledge for each of the sub-projects in Table 1 (such as A1). On the basis of mastering the theoretical knowledge, the students implement the sub-project, and apply the theory into practice, so that students can change from the role of learner to the worker. In the practical teaching, the author, by integrating research teaching, will provide academic articles on the subject for each teaching module for students to expand their studies ([Liu and Xiong, 2016](#); [Larmer and Mergendoller, 2010](#)).

During the project implementation phase, students are in a dominant position. Students work on a group basis and complete project tasks through field research, collection of secondary materials such as the Internet, newspapers, and books, group discussions and self-construction of knowledge. At this stage, the teacher should play the role of a leader, organizer, facilitator and encourager. During this process, teachers should both ensure independent thinking and implementation of students and give the project team the necessary guidance in the key aspects; both conduct phased inspections (to avoid deviation of project implementation from the original intention of the project) and timely correct the problems that arise at each stage, so as to fully mobilize the

students' initiative, stimulate students' potential, and continuously improve students' ability to identify, analyze and solve problems. For example, in the implementation stage of tourism market research, students often encounter situations in which the respondents do not cooperate. At this time, the teacher guides the students to design the questionnaire on the one hand, and on the other hand, teaches the communication skills with the respondents, to improve the practical ability of the students to carry out the questionnaire survey. At the same time, a phased inspection is carried out, and each group is required to submit a "Tourism Market Survey and Analysis Report" and submit the original data of the "Market Survey Questionnaire".

Project Achievement Evaluation

After the completion of the project, each group will summarize the project results of each module in Table 1 to form a complete "Tourism Marketing Planning Proposal", and report and exchange the achievements by defence meeting with other teams. Specifically, students first need to make the results of the group's project into a PPT and present it. The teacher and other students will ask questions, and the team members reply or defend. Finally, the teacher will make the summarized comments. In the process of defence, a good environment and atmosphere should be created for students to fully demonstrate and evaluate the project results. Each team leader serves as a judge and evaluates the reports of each group together with the teachers, so that students can participate more actively and deeply in the process of the entire teaching process, deepen the understanding and application of relevant knowledge, and improve the teaching effect (Gong *et al.*, 2013).

Finally, a comprehensive evaluation is given based on the specific performance of the team during the implementation of the project tasks and during the presentation of the results. After the reform of teaching methods, the assessment method should also be reformed, from simple knowledge assessment to knowledge-ability-quality assessment, so as to guide students to focus on the overall goal of learning and motivate them to actively participate in the learning process, with a view to improving students' comprehensive ability. When evaluating the results of the project, a combination of student self-assessment, mutual evaluation and teacher evaluation is generally adopted. First, let the students evaluate their behaviors during their participation in the project, and then evaluate other groups' learning results. On the basis of the students' self-evaluation and mutual evaluation, the teacher summarizes the completion of the whole project, and make comments on the learning process and achievements of the project-based teaching. In particular, teachers should give in-depth analysis and explanation of the common problems and difficulties, so that students can fully understand the deficiency in the project implementation for further improvement.

Conclusion and Discussion

As a theoretical and practical discipline, the tourism marketing course should apply the project-based teaching approach, which adopts the "student-centered, project-oriented, teacher-led" teaching method. It changes the traditional teaching model of students passively accepting knowledge, meets the requirements of the curriculum reform, and contributes to the tourism marketing curriculum construction. However, due to some subjective and objective factors, the application of project-based teaching in the undergraduate curriculum

construction still needs further improvement in certain aspects. For example, how to ensure students' systematic understanding and mastery of theoretical knowledge; how to strengthen the application of the Internet+ technology in teaching; how to train every student comprehensively in the case of unbalanced quality of students and large class teaching; how to integrate education with teachers' research projects, etc. All these require further study and improvement in future teaching practices.

References

- Askar, P., & Davenport, D. (2009). An investigation of factors related to self-efficacy for java programming among engineering students. *Online Submission*, 8(1), 26-32. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2009.09.007>
- Feng, Y. J., Wu, X. G., Wen, L. Y., & Gao, Q. (2017). Based on project teaching method of "tourism marketing" course teaching reform research. *Data of Culture and Education*, (22), 152-153, 163. <https://dx.chinadoi.cn/10.3969/j.issn.1004-8359.2017.22.071>
- Gong, Z. W., Wu, D., Chen, Y. J., Su, H., & Wang, H. B. (2013). NMC horizon report: 2013 higher education edition (I). *Journal of Guangzhou Open University*, 107-112.
- Larmer, J., & Mergendoller, J. R. (2010). Essentials for Project-Based Learning. *Educational Leadership Journal of the Department of Supervision & Curriculum Development*, 68(1), 34-37.
- Lin, X. Q., & Xiong, Y. (2016). Project teaching method in the application of the undergraduate education and thinking. *Education Teaching BBS*, (25), 200-201. <https://dx.chinadoi.cn/10.3969/j.issn.1674-9324.2016.25.095>
- Wang, H. F., Shen, Y. D., & Sun, H. P. (2012). Theory of undergraduate course project type teaching theory and practice. *Modern Education Science (Higher Education Research)*, (6), 52-56.
- Zhang, Y. X., Yang, Y., & Yuan, X. (2012). Project teaching method in the teaching of undergraduate course practice exploration. *The Experimental Science and Technology*, (6).
- Zong, Y. S., & Li, J. Q., 2013, Series of project teaching research and practice. *China University Teaching*, (11), 44-46. <https://dx.chinadoi.cn/10.3969/j.issn.1005-0450.2013.11.012>