

Some Problems and Suggestions in the Construction and Management of Laboratories for Economics and Management Teaching

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Abstract

The laboratories for economics and management teaching in universities act the role of a fortress for practical talents training in China higher education nowadays. The paper tries to make an analysis on problems arising from the daily management of these laboratories, and attempts to find solutions to prompt the construction and management of the laboratories for economics and management teaching in China.

Keywords: Laboratories for economics and management teaching, Construction, Management

1. Introduction

Along with the boosting development of China's economy, demand for talents in economics and management has been increasing. According to Zhu (2016), more attention has been drawn to the cultivation of university graduates, especially in terms of the cultivation of practical skills and the ability of applying theoretical knowledge to practical issues. Aiming at enhancing the quality of teaching and talents cultivation in economics and management, laboratories for economics and management teaching have sprung up in universities in China. Chang (2016) observed that compared to the laboratories for science teaching, the laboratories for economics and management teaching distinguish themselves for three characteristics. In terms of hardware facilities, computers play the main role in a laboratory for economics and management teaching. In terms of course content, statistics collection and analysis, and simulated business activities are the theme of teaching in the laboratories for economics and management teaching. As a result, in terms of experimental consumables, few experimental consumables are to be involved in the laboratories for economics and management teaching. The laboratories for economics and management teaching play a more and more important role in higher education in today's China. The utilization of these laboratories is expected to benefit the enhancement of university students' creativity and practical skills. Whereas, resulted from the complex theoretical structures of different subjects, here are some problems observed in the operating and management of the laboratories for economics and management teaching. This paper attempts to analyze these existing problems and propose solutions correspondingly.

2. Existing problems observed in the management of the laboratories for economics and management teaching

2.1 Inappropriate faculty structure

The design and delivery of experimental courses of economics and management involves more than one major or one discipline, which demands the cooperation of teachers from different courses, different majors and even different disciplines. In other words, a comprehensively practice-oriented team of faculty is needed. However, the lack of incentive policies for laboratory staff in academic title assessing, scientific research application, ranking evaluation and upgrading training program results in the lack of enthusiasm of experienced or high-level research staff in terms of taking part in experimental teaching. The inappropriateness of the experimental faculty structure presents as the lack of well-trained and experienced experimental people, and the difficulty in meeting the demand of interdisciplinary courses, along with comparatively lagging teaching mode and facilities (including software and hardware). This phenomenon is especially obvious in universities where theoretical research outweighs practical training (Wei, 2016).

2.2 Lack of efficient system for the opening and managing of the laboratories

Two main problems are observed in the opening and managing of the laboratories. The first one is the lack of flexibility in opening and the second one is the lack of overall arrangement. These problems arise from the absence of a public net-work platform based on the internet on which the faculty and students can communicate and make appointments to use the laboratories any time anywhere. It is observed in many universities that administrative staff of the laboratories still rely on phone call and paper registration, which often leads to “car crash” in the use of laboratories and low efficiency in laboratories arrangement.

2.3 Disarray in archival filing

Teaching data are part of the essential reference to the assessment and evaluation of the quality of teaching activities (Wei, 2016). Therefore, systematical and sustainable data archiving is necessary and fundamental for experimental teaching. However, due to the lack of experience, the laboratories for economics and management teaching in China are observed to pay more attention to the hardware while overlook the importance of data archiving.

3. Suggestions in the Construction and Management of Laboratories for Economics and Management Teaching

3.1 Enhancing faculty building

Practical training, in higher education nowadays, is no less important than theoretical training (Xu, 2010). Effective and incentive policies are called for to encourage experimental staff to upgrade their experiment operation skills and teaching methods. For example, policies should be made to encourage and support experimental faculty to take an active part in social service and to take a practical training program in relevant enterprises or institutions. In the meanwhile, the evaluation of teachers` practical skills as well as their ability to equip the students with hands-on practical ability is expected to be part of the academic assessment. As a supplement, introducing talents with relevant management experience or experimental teaching experience is also considered an efficient and effective way to improve the structure of experimental faculty.

3.2 Accelerating the transformation of experimental teaching mode

The laboratories for economics and management teaching should not only function as a supplement of theoretical teaching. The aim of experimental teaching should be equipping students with hands-on practical ability and enhancing their professionalism (Wei, 2016). Since the requirement varies among different courses and majors, correspondingly, the design of experimental teaching mode is supposed to be various. For example, economics and management experiments can be sorted into two types, namely, experiments of economics and experiments of management. Accordingly, relevant departments of teaching affairs in universities should undertake corresponding teaching mode transformation to specify and refine the content of the experimental courses. As for experimental courses of management, these courses can be divided into experimental course of Accounting, experimental course of Audit, experimental course of Statistics, etc.

3.3 Improving the opening and managing system of laboratories

Establishing a sounded opening and managing system is crucial to the operating of a laboratory, such as safety systems and responsibility systems. For example, before using the laboratories, both the faculty and students should be informed of the regulations of experimental safety and facility using safety, and at least one person should be assigned as the person who takes responsibility of the laboratory using. What`s more, advanced management concepts should be introduced to enhance the management of laboratories of economics and management teaching. For example, implementing self-help opening system, which requires the support from a well-developed network-teaching and information platform, is an efficient way to render both the faculty and students freedom to arrange their own experiment time and to take the courses they want (Zhao, 2016). After logging in the system, teachers are able to post experiment plans on the platform, handle student`s appointments, provide guidance to the experiment and online discussion. Administrative staff mainly assist the teaching staff to arrange the opening of the laboratories, deliver the data links, archive the teaching dairies and files, and carry out the daily maintenance of the system.

3.4 Strengthening archival filing

Laboratories management should strengthen archival filing, including teaching files, syllabus design, experimental result reports, equipment warranty, which requires systematical recording and archiving, such as online data capturing, sorting, grouping, and cataloging. Systematic archival filing help ensure the completeness and effectiveness of the laboratory management.

4. Conclusion

Due to the differences that distinguish laboratories for economics and management teaching from those of science teaching, more attention should be paid to the people, the opening and operating system, and the network platform in the construction and management of the former. This paper analyzed some existing problems in the management of laboratories for economics and management teaching from three aspects, that is, faculty structure, system for the opening and managing of the laboratories, and archival filing. Correspondingly, four strategies were put forward to solve the problems, including enhancing faculty building, accelerating the transformation of experimental teaching mode, improving the opening and managing system of laboratories, and strengthening archival filing.

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