

Teaching Innovation and Exploration on PBL-based Film and Television Production Management

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Abstract: The Project-Based Learning (hereinafter referred to as PBL) Teaching Method is mainly focused on students and oriented by projects. For film and television production management courses in applied undergraduate universities, the traditional theoretical lecturing approach can't meet the cultivation requirements of applied talents, and may cause disjunction between theory and practice, and student abilities and industry demands as well. Yet the PBL enables the students to explore practice, discover and solve problems of project-related objectives under teachers' guidance, and form diversified feedback and evaluation through achievement presentation and communication, which not only helps to cultivate students' abilities of self-learning, execution, teamwork and innovation, but also enables the students to experience main working procedures of film and television production management during the learning process, and better match the industry demands.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning; Film and television production management; Applied talents; Teaching innovation

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Introduction

With the increasing maturity of the industrialized system of Chinese films, the film industry demands higher and higher on senior production management talents. As leaders and managers of projects, procedures should do well on operation and management, and know the film and television creation rules. Meanwhile, the industrialization of the industry also put forward higher requirements on producers' abilities of market research and judgment, overall management, resource integration and deployment and so on.

Currently, most film and television production management courses in domestic universities still stay at the introduction and explanation level of basic theories, knowledge, procedures in production, but not at the cultivation and training of filmmaking mind and practical abilities, which causes a large gap between the high-quality development of film and television industry and its demand on production management talents.

By aiming at the teaching difficulties and pain points of traditional production management courses, this thesis attempts to explore a new teaching approach by integrating Project-Based Learning teaching concept into production management courses, and to summarize experience that can be learnt and promoted by similar courses.

1. Curriculum design based on PBL concept

Project-Based Learning, different from Problem-Based Learning, takes projects as the teaching carrier, and tasks as the orientation. It takes the curriculum knowledge system as an overall project that can be split into periodical tasks, implants the learning of core concepts and principles into projects and promotes the process through the setting of serial objectives.^[1] As the main body of project promotion, students discover and solve problems actively by the theories they've learnt while completing the projects, update the existing perception and promote the construction of new knowledge constantly by the model of "learning by doing". As the task publishers and project assistants, teachers set the overall objectives for students, discompose and plan tasks of each period, integrate theoretical knowledge, experience and methods into the process of project guidance, so as to truly realize the organic combination of

theory and practice.

Therefore, the author put forward a teaching reform experiment for the art management major in the junior year, basic procedures of film and television project operation as the implementation routes, set up student project teams and required them to carry out film production practice under the guidance of teachers, connected knowledge points by practical tasks in each period, and integrated various requirements on abilities into the practical teaching design of each link.

2. Detailed implementation method of PBL-based film and television production management courses

2.1 Set teaching objectives

Under the design concept of PBL, the overall teaching objectives of the course are to enable students to learn the scientific production procedures and norms, especially the operation rules and abilities of film and television production.

Considering the students' individual differences in learning bases and abilities, the author formulated two levels of learning objectives. The low-level objective, which was the “pass line” that all students must achieve, was to master the basic operation process of film and television projects, and the basic formats and formulation specification of production writing. The high-level objective, as advanced requirement put forward for students with better learning bases, comprehension, and capabilities, was to master the abilities of market research and judgment, creative planning, resource coordination, team management and cooperation, etc. The course also integrated filmmaking mind, professional ethics, teamwork and innovation spirit into each link of the teaching practice, to influence and guide students' thinking model and value orientation.

2.2 Create situations and publish project tasks

In the process of the PBL implementation, the author clarified the concept and content of production management in the first class, and introduced students into producers' situations. After guiding them to sort out basic operation procedures of film and television projects, the author published the overall project tasks of the course and divided the whole task into four phased tasks: project planning, preliminary preparation, shooting and production, and market promotion, and specified standards and requirements that should be reached in each stage.

In addition, the course encouraged students to plan projects according to the market demands or the requirements and preferences of short-film competitions and film festivals, provided students with opportunities to solve real problems through actual project objectives.

2.3 Guide the project practice in stages, and provide scaffolding teaching

After the students go into the project practice, teachers should play the role of inspiration, guidance, supervision and control, and timely provide students with theoretical guidance and practical experience, and scaffolding for their learning.

The specific implementation process is shown in the figure below.



Figure 1. The Implementation Flow Chart of PBL-based Production Management Courses

Under this curriculum design, the teaching subject has changed from teachers to students, the teaching method has changed from

teachers' one-way lecturing to students' independent exploration under the guidance and assistance of teachers, the teaching objective has changed from mastering theoretical knowledge to applying relevant theories into completing project tasks.

2.4 Establish a diversified evaluation mechanism

2.4.1 Diversified evaluation methods

The ultimate purpose of PBL is not to evaluate, but to enable students to discover problems in the process of learning through the mode of diversified evaluation, and get better works by continuous improvement and perfection. [2] Therefore, this course abandoned the traditional closed-off assessment methods, and no longer judged the results just by one final examination. Instead, it conducted the assessment by both formative and summative evaluation in the form of mid-term venture capital meetings and final project road-shows, and brought the learning and practicing process as well as the project work quality into assessment.

In the assessment, there were evaluations of project teams, and individual students as well. Evaluations of project teams were mainly conducted from four aspects—the innovation, feasibility and market prospect of the project planning; the scientificity and standardability of the production work; the completeness of resource integration; and the quality of final works and the presentation effect. And evaluations of individual students mainly included the professional ability, innovation consciousness, teamwork spirit, learning attitude shown in the process of practice. It aimed to make scientific, fair and reasonable evaluation for each student.

The diversified evaluation methods made the final grades no longer the only concern of students. Scene settings close to the actual industry could bring students a greater sense of achievement and exploration motivation, and help them to output excellent and valuable results in the future.

2.4.2 Diversified evaluation subjects

Except the evaluation method, the subjects participating in the evaluation process were also diversified, including not only the traditional teacher evaluation, but also the students' self-evaluation, team evaluation and expert evaluation.

For example, in the mid-term project venture capital meeting, the score of the planning part was composed of 40% of mutual evaluation and 60% of the evaluation by the teacher. The project road-shows at the end of the semester invited not only students, but also college leaders and some industry practitioners. The on-site questioning, communication and comments helped the students to truly understand the needs of the industry, expand their ways of thinking, and improve their team cooperation and communication skills. This presentation was not only a final examination, it also provided the student projects with a real presentation platform close to the industry frontline.

3. Teaching effect after the curriculum reform

The course after the PBL concept reform realized the project-oriented and student-centered objective, connected various theoretical knowledge points, methods and skills involved in production management in the project practice, which helped them to set up work specification in conformity with the actual industry practice.

Compared with the teaching effect before the curriculum reform, students' learning enthusiasm has been significantly improved, their class participation has been deepened. Through the method of "learning by doing", most of the students have preliminarily acquired the basic filmmaking thinking and mastered the basic abilities required for filmmaking work.

According to the annual survey data after finishing the course, the number of students who thought the course "interesting and substantial", or helpful to the future learning and occupation has increased from 62.5% to 90.6%; the number of students who expressed their intention of related works has increased from 38.2% to 67.8%.

Moreover, many students started to apply the knowledge and skills learned in this course into other related courses; the practice process of encouraging cross-disciplinary cooperation helped some students find long-term partners in their future career, and laid a foundation for their entering the real industry front-line in the future.

Facing the rapidly-changing film and television industry, this course needs to continuously deepen the integration of industry and education, constantly optimize and upgrade itself, so as to provide strong support for the education of high-quality production management talents suitable for the development of the industry.

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