

Exploration and Practice of the Organic Integration of Professional Skills Competitions and



Application-oriented Undergraduate Course Teaching:

A Case Study of Introduction to Museology

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Abstract: Professional skills refer to the ways and systems of action that individuals master through practice. To achieve the goal of cultivating application-oriented talents, the cultivation of skills is an important direction for the current reform of application-oriented higher education. By establishing an organic integration mechanism between professional skills competitions and classroom teaching, competition plans can be developed based on professional training programs, teaching outlines, student situations, and course progress. Incorporating competition results into course evaluations can increase students' learning motivation, improve their skill level, consolidate knowledge, and enhance their abilities, making this mechanism an essential means of improving classroom teaching quality.

Keywords: Professional Skills Competitions; Application-oriented Undergraduate; Course Teaching

1. The Importance of Skill Development in Applied Talents Training

Undergraduate students are the largest group of high-quality specialized talents in training, and "undergraduate education is the most important foundation for improving the quality of higher education" (Zhang & Zhou, 2020). Applied undergraduate universities aim to train high-level applied talents. The talent training of applied universities should not only follow the educational laws of undergraduate talent training but also emphasize practice and strengthen application. In order to achieve the goal of training applied talents, emphasis on skill development is an important direction for the current teaching reform of applied universities. Skills are the action methods and action systems that individuals master through practice.

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Skills are the action methods and action systems that individuals master through practice (Jin, 2019). Skills include general skills (or commonly known as generic skills) and special skills (or commonly known as professional skills). General skills are basic and universal skills that all workers have, while special skills refer to specialized and specialized skilled techniques as well as action and thinking skills (Shi, 2020). Occupational skills are the skills that reflect in the professional field. Occupational skills are the proficient, standardized professional skills, actions, or thinking abilities that workers have

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in a certain profession.

Knowledge is the theoretical basis for the formation of abilities, while skills are the practical basis for the formation of abilities (The Editorial Committee of Zhejiang Cultural Relics Yearbook, 2015). The development of abilities is achieved in the process of mastering and applying knowledge and skills. If only the accumulation of knowledge is emphasized and the development and training of practical skills of students are not emphasized, they will encounter difficulties and setbacks in the process of employment, and they cannot achieve good career development. In view of the relationship between skills and knowledge and abilities, in order to meet the needs of social development in the new era and to cultivate creative talents, applied undergraduate universities should avoid relying solely on knowledge-based exam scores to determine students' abilities. Instead, they should combine knowledge and skills teaching with ability training organically, and effectively integrate skill competitions into corresponding course teaching, which will be an effective attempt.

2. An Attempt to Effectively Integrate Skills Competitions into Course Teaching

The discipline of cultural heritage and museology is a new major set up by many applied undergraduate universities in recent years. "The overall situation of China's cultural relics and museology talents and the requirements for building a strong country of cultural heritage are not yet in line. The total amount of talents is insufficient, the structure of the cultural and sports teams is unreasonable, the quality of talents is low, especially the shortage of high-level leading talents, scientific

and technological professional and technical talents, skill-based vocational and technical talents, and composite management talents" (Wei , 2022). Currently, China's cultural relics industry is in a "golden opportunity period" of high demand and rapid development. "Introduction to Museology" is a compulsory course for this major, and it is a basic course. It is usually offered in the first semester of the freshman year. Taking this course as an example, it has a certain representativeness.

2.1 Skill Competition Content

According to the training program of the cultural heritage and museology major, the training goal of the major is to cultivate talents with firm political ideals, noble professional ethics, solid knowledge of cultural relics, and strong practical skills. Therefore, the skill competition content should reflect the characteristics and needs of the profession. For example, the content can include artifact identification, restoration techniques, museum exhibition design, and cultural heritage protection laws and regulations, among others. (*The corresponding relationship between professional skills and cultural and museum departments is shown in Figure 1*)

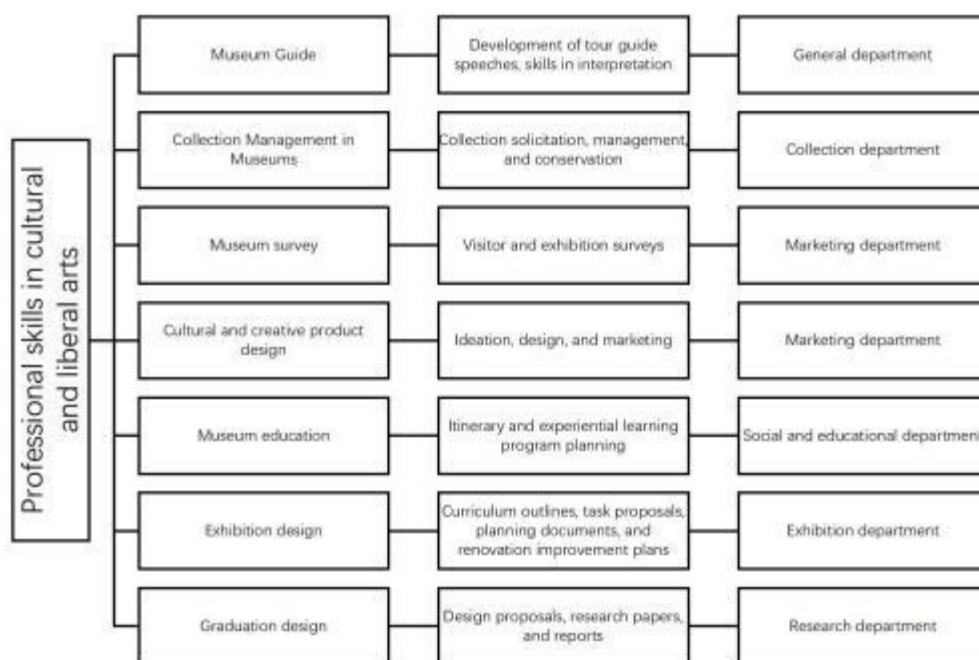


Figure 1: Creative, Design, Marketing Museum Guide

2.2 Organization and Implementation of Skill Competitions

The skill competition can be organized by the school or the professional department. Before the competition, Evaluation Criteria Referring to the relevant standards set by national organizations, major museums, and other organizations for such competitions, and combining with the actual situation of students, the standards that need to be achieved for each skill are formulated and quantified. The evaluation criteria tend to focus on the cultivation and formation of students' comprehensive abilities, professional qualities, disciplinary thinking, innovative ability, and emotional values. For example,

the evaluation requirements for interpreters include: (1) The interpretation content should promote the core socialist values, have a clear theme, a rigorous structure, and concise language. (30 points)

(2) The interpretation should have clear and fluent pronunciation, appropriate rhythm, round and loud voice, emotional integration, mastery of logical stress, logical pauses, and concise and easy-to-understand language. (30 points)

(3) The interpreter's posture should be natural and generous, and appropriate gestures should be used to create visual illusions in the audience's eyes,

stimulate their imagination, and deepen their understanding of the content. (30 points)

(4) For the convenience of visiting, interpreters should be good at choosing appropriate interpretation positions. (10 points).

The evaluation requirements for cultural and creative product design are:

(1) The design works must deeply explore the cultural connotation of Taishan, reflect the cultural elements of Taishan cultural relics and the stories behind them (40 points), and have innovation, practicality, and marketability while showing the charm of Taishan culture. (40 points)

(2) All entries must be original designs by the participants. (20 points)

2.3 Competition Organization and Evaluation Method Develop a competition plan according to the course schedule.

The competition is divided into two stages. According to the course progress, the museum interpretation competition is arranged first, followed by the museum cultural and creative product design competition. At the beginning of the course, students are informed of the competition content and its significance. In the course teaching, the teacher teaches the skill standards, practices in class, and

guides students in group practice and cooperation outside of class, gradually improving their skills.

The competition evaluation adopts on-site display of students' interpretation skills and on-site scoring; the cultural and creative product design competition uses students' design proposals, and scores are given through defense. The evaluation subject is composed of three parts: the subject teacher, industry mentors, and classmates.

2.4 Effective integration with course evaluation, docking with college student innovation competitions, and docking with various competitions at all levels of society.

The skill competition results are scored on a percentage basis, included in the regular grades, and finally included in the course's final evaluation, accounting for no less than 30%. Students with excellent results are recommended to participate in similar competitions at all levels.

(5) Establish a continuous competition mechanism According to the professional training plan for cultural relics and museum science, in subsequent courses such as "Museum Collection Management", "Museum Display Design", "Cultural Museum Professional Design", "Field Archaeology", and "Cultural Relics Protection", different professional skills will be connected, and a continuous competition mechanism for professional skills will be established to ensure the effectiveness of skill competition. The corresponding relationship between each course and professional skills is shown in Figure 2.



3.Results

3.1 Student motivation and professional identity have significantly improved.

Participating in skills competitions has stimulated students' enthusiasm for self-learning, improved their overall qualities, innovation capabilities, and practical skills. After each competition, group members promptly exchange their experiences, gains, shortcomings, and discuss ways to solve problems and focus on addressing the existing issues for the next competition, making the competition more targeted and effective. If students encounter difficult problems and have doubts that they cannot solve within the group, they will seek guidance from the instructor in a timely manner. Through participating in skills competitions, students deeply understand that details determine success or failure, and that competition results are influenced by multiple factors such as subject knowledge, personal qualities, and psychological qualities. This encourages students to constantly identify their shortcomings, continuously learn and make up for them, and actively and seriously treat every aspect of classroom learning. This also cultivates students' spirit of calmness, carefulness, and not giving up easily when facing difficulties. During the competition, students deeply understand that historical relics carry a nation's splendid civilization, while museums are the preservers and recorders of history. " A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. " They are also important halls for protecting and inheriting human civilization. The study of relics and museum professional is an important part of the cultural strong country strategy, and building a socialist cultural strong country is the foundation and support for achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Feedback from student Xing Runsheng: "In my opinion, museum science is a comprehensive discipline that integrates natural and social sciences, covering a wide range of aspects such as organization, induction, art, design, construction, service, and even psychology. This also

means that learning museum science requires contacting and learning a lot of knowledge, not only filling one's own knowledge, but also enriching one's own soul. Museum science has important educational significance and is enlightening people "The intellectual and prosaic sciences are the" second classroom "that benefits the people, so learning museum science well is also of great significance to me."

3.2 Competitions promote the improvement of teachers' professional abilities.

Through competitions, teachers can have close contact with students, abandon the traditional classroom teaching method of "pouring knowledge into students," and shift teaching from solely focusing on "teaching" to focusing on students' "learning," allowing students to have a positive learning experience and actively participate in teachers' classroom teaching, thereby improving teaching effectiveness. From September 2021 to July 2022, through interviews and feedback from two semesters of teaching checks, the proportion of students who rated "excellent" for "Introduction to Museum Studies" has risen to 93.1%. Competitions also drive teachers to study and explore the practical development of the cultural and relic industry. Teachers focus not only on teaching theories but also on cultivating students' abilities through case-based teaching, simulation teaching, situational teaching, and other teaching methods.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations:

The use of skill competitions in the teaching of "Introduction to Museum Studies" can improve the teaching effectiveness in the following ways:

Firstly, strengthen the two "combinations". That is, combining skill competitions with professional theoretical courses (An, 2003), and combining skill competitions with practical teaching and training. Guiding skill competitions with the requirements of professional theory and practical teaching, and using professional competitions to guide and promote the quality of school's professional courses, enabling students to integrate into the social environment, and

to understand new issues in reality, thus cultivating students' comprehensive application ability of theoretical and practical professional knowledge.

Secondly, do a good job in the top-level design of skill competitions. Fully recognize the positive promotion of skill competitions on students' mastery of professional theoretical knowledge. Combining professional characteristics, developing and improving various professional competition organization and management systems, in addition to professional competitions hosted by the school itself, can also be expanded to jointly organize or participate in professional competitions at different levels with social cultural and creative institutions, actively organizing students to participate extensively, and improving students' operational skills and theoretical level.

Thirdly, manage the process of skill competitions well. Make a competition plan according to the purpose and requirements of the skill competition, strengthen the teacher's process guidance, link monitoring, and risk management in the skill competition, pay attention to collecting and feedback students' opinions, and timely adjust and solve various theoretical and practical problems discovered by students in practice.

Finally, skill competitions can also strengthen and improve the construction of the professional course teaching team. Schools should increase the rewards for skill competition guidance teachers so as to organically combine the cultivation of theoretical teaching and innovation abilities and the skills of professional course practice teaching. Thus, strengthening and innovating the construction of the professional course teaching system model, improving the quality of innovative and applied talents in universities, creating an environment for cultivating innovative talents, expanding the ways of cultivating students' hands-on ability and employment ability, and serving the local economy (Liu et al., 2014).

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to this work.

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