

Teaching Concept of Athlone Institute of Technology in Ireland Enlighten on the Construction of First-Class Undergraduate Majors in Local Application-Oriented Universities in China

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Abstract

This article takes the Tourism And Hospitality Management Major of the Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Department of Athlone Institute of Technology in Ireland as an example, and analyzes the characteristics of its application-oriented talent training teaching philosophy, which is mainly reflected in the clear professional positioning and clear talent training goals; the curriculum system is flexible and diverse; the teaching focuses on students cultivation of ability; characteristics of the specialties of practical teaching in practice are obvious. From these, the enlightenment to the construction of first-class undergraduate programs in local application-oriented universities in China is to clarify the relationship between school positioning and professional development; " Diversified cultivate, Three-dimensional fusion, Five in one " education concept to revise the talent training plan; strengthen the construction of teaching staff to meet the needs of application-oriented talent training.

Keywords

Teaching Concept; local application-oriented universities; first-class undergraduate; construction of majors; Athlone Institute of Technology.

1. Overview of Higher Education in Ireland

Known as the "Emerald Island State", Ireland is a small wealthy country in Western Europe with a population of 4.7 million. In 2018, the United Nations Development Index rated Ireland as the fourth country in Europe. Ireland has a long history of education, and its higher education is world-class. Most universities are ranked in the top 5 % of the world, and some universities are even ranked in the top 2% of the world. Its influence on world scientific research ranks tenth in the world [1]. Ireland, as the only English-speaking countries in Euro Area and Europe, has made more multinational companies lean more towards Ireland when they redeployed their European strategy. The close connection between local higher education and industry has also pushed Irish universities to expand international cooperation and business cooperation. There are three main types of higher education in Ireland, each with its own advantages. The first is a comprehensive university, which is a national research center, in a strong strength and high level of life sciences, information planning, economic management, law, language and literature; the second is the Institute of Technology, which focus on training applied talents. Such colleges maintain extensive and close cooperation with companies in various industries to ensure that students can go to enterprises for internships during their studies; the third is private institutions, in addition to comprehensive university and polytechnic courses, these institutions also provide some certificate training required by the industry.

Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT), Ireland, was established in 1970 to cultivate applied talents for the development of central Ireland. The college's philosophy is to "To provide student-centered, career-focused education, training and applied research programmers for

our diverse cohort of learners within a professional and supportive environment. We are fully committed to intensive engagement with regional business, enterprise and social communities while maintaining our global orientation.”[2] In October 2019, Athlone Institute of Technology and Limerick Institute of Technology announced that they will jointly establish the Polytechnic University to jointly promote the training of applied talents that serve regional and global development in Ireland[3].

2. Analysis of Teaching Concepts of Athlone Institute of Technology

This article uses Tourism & Hospitality Management in Department of Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure in AIT as examples to analyze the characteristics of its teaching philosophy of applied talent training.

2.1. Clear Professional Positioning and Talent Training Goals

Tourism is the largest industry in Ireland, receiving more than 10 million international tourists each year, providing about 325,000 jobs, and contributing about 6 billion euros to the Irish economy. Ireland won the title of "Europe's Best Travel Destination" for the third consecutive year in 2019, which is the icing on the cake of Irish tourism. The vigorous development of the Irish tourism industry has put forward higher requirements for the cultivation of professional applied talents in tourist & hotels major. The goal of AIT's tourism & hotel management professional training is to focus on vocational education, and to train honorable degree graduates who with the necessary problem-solving skills, critical thinking and communication skills for the global tourism and hospitality industry, to make them become leader in the industry. The professional talent training goal is clear. Under the guidance of the college-running concept, it proposes a professional positioning based on the global tourism and hotel industry and focuses on vocational education, highlighting the goal of training skilled talents. The curriculum system setting, the use of teaching methods, and the arrangement of practical activities are all services to achieve this goal.

2.2. Curriculum System Set Up Flexible and Diverse

Professional courses are career -oriented and flexible enough to ensure graduates can work in different areas of tourism, hospitality and leisure management. First, the curriculum is flexible and diverse. Set up theoretical courses, theoretical + practical courses, practical courses, practical courses , tutoring courses, etc. according to the requirements of vocational positions, to achieve multi-dimensional teaching of " intra- curricular and extra – curricular, campus and off – campus, online and offline ", and gradually deepen students' use and understanding of theoretical knowledge; second , the setting of class hours achieves a perfect balance of lectures, experimental sessions, tutorials and self-study. In a course, students generally spend 30% of the time in the classroom to receive lectures from teachers. More than half of the time is fully practiced in laboratories such as cooking, catering, accommodation, management software, leisure SPA, and market research. The other 10 -15% of the time is teacher tutoring and student self-study sessions; third, many off-campus practical courses. During 3-4 years of professional study, students will be offered paid work. They will have the many opportunities to visit companies in scenic spots and to visit hotels. They will have the opportunity to participate in short-term study tours abroad. They can also practice professionally in top hotels in many countries. This will help students to better understand the job requirements and industry development of the company, which is also the advantage of all the Polytechnics in Ireland.

2.3. Teaching Focuses on the Cultivation of Students' Abilities

Teachers use a variety of teaching methods in the teaching process, focusing on student ability development, mainly reflected in:

2.3.1 Teaching content is not limited to a certain textbook

There is no designated textbook for the course. The teaching content is mainly based on the course resources uploaded by the teacher to the campus network Moodle platform and printed materials in the classroom. These course resources and materials are mainly based on a large number of cases and reading materials. Compared with domestic universities, the progress of teach in AIT is significantly slower. Teachers provide detailed and thorough explanations of knowledge points and combine a large number of case discussions to achieve the purpose of applying what they have learned.

2.3.2 Student-centered during the teaching process

Student-centered during the teaching process, the integration of discussion and teaching is fully reflected. The number of students in each teaching class is small, generally not more than 20, and some classes are only 7-8, which provides a good condition for in-depth classroom discussion and interaction. Through participation in classroom teaching, I found that international students are obviously better at asking questions and interacting with teachers than Chinese students. They will interrupt teachers' teaching at any time to express their views, which is basically impossible for domestic application-based college students. In the teaching process, teachers and students fully discuss the topics that the teacher has arranged for the students or the content that the students are interested in. This gives students the opportunity to show the results of their extracurricular learning [4], which is conducive to mobilizing their enthusiasm for active thinking and learning.

2.3.3 Course assessment focuses on process

Course assessment focuses on process, and academic integrity, extensive reading, group cooperation, subject speech, and critical innovation are included in the assessment system. Process evaluation is mainly based on the completion of projects, results accounted for total grades of 50 to 60%. The content of projects is close to the actual situation of the enterprise, but the scope is far beyond the content of the lecture, and requires students to complete in groups. To complete these projects, students need to consult a large number of reference materials outside the classroom, go to the company's field research, and discuss with the group members. This process itself is a process of expanding ideas, enriching knowledge, and improving abilities. After the project is completed, the group presentative the homework results in the form of topic lectures, and accepts the criticism of teachers and the classmates. This process virtually trains students' resilience and oral expression skills. At the same time, in order to prevent the situation that individual students are unable to contribute in group cooperation, the teacher will ask each group leader to list the division of labor and the share of the group members. In order to get high marks, students must participate fully in group activities.

2.4. Obvious Features of Practice Teaching

The booming development of the Irish tourist hotel industry has ensured the smooth development of the practice of AIT tourist hotel majors. According to the professional talent training program, students will be arranged for 400 hours of paid work in the second academic year to ensure that students have the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills learned in the first academic year in a real job environment; Students regularly visit hotels and leisure attractions in Ireland during their 3-4 years of study to learn about the latest industry developments, challenges and opportunities; Students have the opportunity to travel to the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, France, China, Dubai and other countries for short-term study trip in 3-4 years of study; in the early stage of graduation, the world's top international hotel and tourism companies, including Four Seasons, Hilton, Jumeriah International, Marriott Hotels, Starwood, etc. will come to the school to recruit graduates. Through these practices, one is to achieve a professional college positioning based on the global tourism and hotel industry and

to achieve mission to focus on vocational education, and the other is to enable students to have a clear career aspiration, and to improve their learning skills from perceptual knowledge to the rational understanding, the discussion with the teacher in the classroom is no longer boring, which deepens the students' understanding of the industry and clarifies the learning goals.

3. Enlightenment on the Construction of First-Class Undergraduate Majors in Local Application-Oriented Universities in China

3.1. Clarify the Relationship Between University Positioning and Professional Development

The construction of first-class majors is the basis for the construction of first-class universities and first-class disciplines. Only first-class majors can drive and improve the level of university discipline construction, and improve the university's running level and core competitiveness. The construction of first-class majors is inseparable from the accumulation of university disciplines and regional industrial characteristics. The orientation of local application-oriented colleges and universities determines the direction and goal of first-class professional construction [5]. Local application-oriented universities should adhere to the demand orientation of professional setting and development to serve regional economic and social development, find the support of university and professional development from the new situation of the development of local leading industries and emerging industries, and condense the school-running characteristics and professional characteristics, unique "color and style" unlike traditional research university and other sibling university[6]. Taking Xiangyang City, Hubei Province as an example, the city currently has two billion-CNY industries in the agricultural product processing industry and the automobile industry, and is working hard to create a billion-CNY rail transit industry cluster. As the only local undergraduate university— Hubei University of Arts and Sciences, first of all, it has clearly defined its adherence to a comprehensive, application-oriented school running orientation, adheres to the base of Xiangyang, faces Hubei, and radiates the nationwide service orientation; Secondly, it closely follows the attributes of Xiangyang's industrial development and market demand, condenses its school-running characteristics, and relies on the 100 billion-level industry of "automobiles and transportation" to strive to build a high-level application-oriented comprehensive university featuring transportation; Thirdly, in terms of professional development, to meet the needs of Xiangyang's "automotive and transportation" industrial cluster development, centralize the school's superior resources to carry out the "automotive and transportation" professional cluster construction, and strive to drive the general majors through the core majors, form the core competitive advantages of the university, and achieve characteristics development.

3.2. Revising the Talent Training Plan in Accordance with the Educational Concept of "Multiple Training, Three-Dimensional Integration, and the Five in One"

Local application-oriented universities aim at cultivating application-oriented talents and serving regional economic and social development. Talent training plan is the carrier of applied talent training in local universities. All majors should pass sufficient expert demonstration, market demonstration, industry demonstration and other links before formulating talent training programs. In accordance with the educational concept of "multiple cultivation, three-dimensional integration, and five in one", scientifically and rationally determine the application-oriented talent training goals, graduation requirements, and curriculum system in the talent training program. "Multiple cultivation" means the realization of on-campus training + enterprise training through industrial faculty. Through school-enterprise cooperation and

education, enterprises can directly reflect the requirements for talents in talent training programs and talent training processes to ensure that students who complete their studies can enter the workplace from the campus with zero transitions, and solve the problems of disjointed talent cultivation from industry needs, disparity between professional education and corporate development, and disjointed student learning from the actual position; "Three-dimensional integration" refers to the flexible construction of an applied talent training curriculum system based on the "post-capacity-course" principle, and the creation of a curriculum group based on the logic of "vocational literacy-professional skills-post skills". Curriculum system and curriculum group should reflect the organic unity of knowledge, ability and literacy. Talent training should not only expand the professional knowledge of talents, but also improve their comprehensive literacy and innovative thinking; "Five in one" is to build a "five in one" enterprise education platform for "teaching, learning, research, doing, creating". Through the integration of extra-curricular, on-line, off-line, and extra-curricular resources inside and outside the school, students are allowed to "learn by doing, think during research, and learn from innovation" in self-learning and active learning[7].

3.3. Strengthen the Construction of Teaching Staff to Meet the Needs of Application-Oriented Personnel Training

In order to realize the combined use of multiple teaching methods in the teaching process, students- central, and cultivating students 'autonomous learning ability, the improvement of teachers' own quality is the key. Therefore, it is especially important to build a teacher echelon with reasonable structure, high teaching level and good teaching effect, and adapt it to the needs of application-oriented talents to cultivate teaching ability. It is necessary to strengthen the training of teachers' industry knowledge, industry skills and teaching skills, and build a dual-teacher teacher team; Through curriculum construction, curriculum reform, teaching research, scientific research, etc., continue to improve teachers' teaching standards and scientific research capabilities; In terms of teaching methods, it introduces practical problems of corporate positions, cultivates students' application ability, and promotes teaching methods such as project-driven, two-way interactive, case-based, scenario simulation, exhibition and classroom games, etc. Through the change of student roles and learning process, students are guided to change from passive learning to active learning, inspire students' potential, improve teaching and learning effects, and implement the training of applied talents.

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