

# The Cultivation of Core Competence of Business Administration Students for the New Liberal Arts Context

## -- Taking as an Example of A University

Ying Zhang

School of Business and Management, Anhui Finance and Economics University, Bengbu, 233030, China

### Abstract

The construction of new liberal arts, which realizes the deep integration of disciplines and aims at cultivating new compound talents, is the focus of the construction of humanities and social science majors in China, and puts forward new requirements for the core ability cultivation of students majoring in business administration. Through the survey, it is found that the school has taken some actions in the reform of students' core competence education and teaching, but the students' practical ability still needs to be improved, and the teachers' practical teaching experience is not enough. The content, system and objectives of core competence training need to be further improved. It is necessary to improve the curriculum system of student core competence training, strengthen teacher training, make full use of teaching resources and platforms, and jointly improve the cultivation of student core competence through the linkage of the three classes.

### Keywords

New liberal arts; Business administration students; Core competence.

### 1. Introduction

In 2020, the National Work Conference on New Liberal Arts was held and 《New Liberal Arts Work Declaration》 was released, which started the comprehensive strategic deployment for the construction of new liberal arts in China (Nie Yunxia and Huang Xing, 2021). In essence, Construction of new Liberal Arts is a kind of interdisciplinary communication and integration of the depth to requeste the new content, new technologies, new ideas, new methods, new system integrated into the traditional liberal arts (Han Zuosheng and pei-guang Lin, 2021). It is an important way to promote the development of China's higher education connotation extension, and is the inevitable requirement of catering to the modernization development of our country, It aims to promote the construction of new liberal arts talents (Zhao Kuiying, 2021). Business administration majors belong to humanities and social sciences, but they are inseparable from science and technology, mathematics and other science and engineering majors, providing an important platform for training comprehensive and compound talents, which coincides with the construction of new liberal arts. Seizing the opportunity of national new liberal arts construction and actively promoting the core ability of business administration college students is an important measure to cultivate high-quality college students in the new era, as well as the fundamental purpose of the development of higher education in China

## 2. The Cultivation of College Students' Core Ability is an Inevitable Requirement of the Construction of New Liberal Arts

On the one hand, the cultivation of college students' core ability under the background of new liberal arts is an important content of undergraduate education. Talent cultivation is the central task of the development of higher education and the construction of new liberal arts should return to talent cultivation eventually. In October 2018, the Ministry of Education issued the "Opinions on Accelerating the Construction of High-level Undergraduate Education to Comprehensively Improve the Ability of Talent Cultivation" clearly pointed out that the comprehensive revitalization of undergraduate education, adhere to the "people-oriented" concept, promote the level and quality of undergraduate education. The new liberal arts requires the cultivation of comprehensive talents, and the cultivation of college students' core ability is more important, which is not only an important goal of students' development, but also the focus of undergraduate education. On the other hand, under the background of new liberal arts, the cultivation of core competence of business administration students has put forward new requirements. The construction of new liberal arts is not only the result of the call of The Times, but also the result of China's liberal arts construction actively responding to the development of socialist modernization. At present academia for a new arts has no unified definition, but its connotation lies in the emphasis on innovation, breaking the traditional gap between the liberal arts and the closeness between the liberal arts disciplines, through the depth of the communication between disciplines, creative arts development idea and vision, develop multilateral development comprehensive talent (Yu Jianxing, 2021). The construction of new liberal arts has put forward new requirements for talent cultivation in China's higher education, namely, new mission, new concept and new mode (Tong Xin and Zhang Jilin, 2021). The new mission requires that the development of students' core competence must be consistent with the Realization of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and strive to promote the process of Chinese socialist modernization. The new concept is the theoretical requirement of the new liberal arts for the cultivation of college students' core ability. The new mode is the practical requirement of the new liberal arts for the cultivation of college students' core competence. Innovation and transformation are needed in education and teaching mode, talent cultivation mode, teaching reform mode, and evaluation system of training mode results (Tong Xin and Zhang Jilin, 2021).

## 3. The Indicators of Core Competence of Business Administration Students

At present, although the construction of business administration professionals in colleges and universities emphasizes the cultivation of students' core competence, and all parties have made efforts to actively innovate, the specific composition of business administration students' core competence is still lack of a unified understanding, which needs to be further studied. Core competence is a constantly developing concept. With the development of economy and society and the change of job market demand, the core competence required by college students is also changing (Dou Mingying, 2018). Scholars analyze the core competencies of students majoring in business administration from slightly different perspectives, but mainly focus on cognitive ability of social responsibility, professional skills, innovation ability and practical ability. Among them, innovation ability includes basic knowledge of innovation and entrepreneurship, innovation thinking, innovation skills (Liu Junfu, Guo Liyan et al., 2011) and innovation learning ability; Professional skills mainly include students' learning effect of professional courses, ability to use professional knowledge and ability to use teaching software of professional courses. Practical ability mainly includes students' analytical ability, practical operation ability

and communication ability on major-related issues (Zhang Xiaofen, Zhou Xianhua, 2021) and applied writing ability (Tang Yan, 2016). The cognitive ability of social responsibility is the basis for the application of other abilities. As college students in the new era, legal responsibility, ethical responsibility and charitable responsibility are representative indicators of cognitive ability of social responsibility.

#### **4. The Survey Analysis of the Current Status of Core Competencies of Business Administration Students**

The development of core competencies of business administration students is not only related to the school's existing resource foundation, but also related to students, teachers and development situation. By analyzing the survey data obtained from student surveys and graduate Employers' feedback, the part will analyze the status of core competencies of students of business administration majors in the A university, and the problems and various influencing factors of core competency education and teaching of students can be derived, which provides a scientific basis for the core competency enhancement strategy of business administration students.

##### **4.1. Pre-existing Foundation in Core Competency Development**

In recent years, the Business Administration majors of Anhui A University have devoted themselves to the reform of students' core competency education and teaching in recent years, and actively catering to the needs of the construction of new liberal arts and striving to cultivate composite liberal arts talents. Firstly, it has revised personnel training program to strengthen the cultivation of innovative practical ability, and increasing the proportion of experimental practical training courses in the curriculum setting. According to the target position of business administration of cultivating high-level applied business administration talents, and the curriculum system setting in the talent training program takes the practical ability cultivation as an important basis. The proportion of credit hours of experimental and practical training courses for 2019-level business administration students accounts for about 30% of the credits of the talent training program, which is nearly 4 percentage points more than the practical hours of the 2017-level talent training program. In addition to the ERP and management integrated experimental courses, The hours of practical teaching of the professional courses have also increased the proportion more than the original curriculum design. Secondly, it also strengthens school-enterprise cooperation and pays attention to discipline competitions to cultivate students' core competencies. The majors of the business management carry out school-enterprise cooperation with enterprises such as Bengbu Post and Deli Glass to cultivate students' practical and innovation skills. In the talent training program for 2018 and beyond, disciplinary competitions are entered into the curriculum system, and professional internships and investigations are incorporated into innovation and entrepreneurship competitions, which each student is required to participate in at least one event. In addition, according to the plan of categorization cultivation (students take examinations for graduate school, civil service, and other jobs directly), the elective module courses of innovation and entrepreneurship amount to 28 credits, aimed to enhance the cultivation of students' innovative ability and practical ability.

##### **4.2. Survey Design of Core Competency Status of Business Administration Students**

The development of core competencies is an integrated system, related to talent development programs, faculty, teaching resources and facilities, and students' own factors. In order to have a deeper understanding of the specific situation of core competency development of business administration students and the problems that exist, the current students and graduates of

business administration majors were selected to conduct a survey. The survey was mainly in the form of questionnaires, and the survey was conducted in November-December 2020, with 153 questionnaires distributed and 115 valid questionnaires collected. Since this survey should preferably involve some groups who have actually experienced the talent development measures related to core competency education and teaching, junior and some senior business administration students were selected. The content aspect of the survey included an investigation of the perceived status of the core competencies themselves as well as the related pedagogical factors that affect the core competencies. The questionnaire was administered on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree.

### 4.3. Analysis of Survey Results

#### 4.3.1. Overall Status of Business Administration Students' Core Competence

According to the investigation and analysis results of professional skills (Table 1 below), students' perception of the overall learning effect of professional courses and the ability to use professional teaching software is good, with an average of 4.53 and 4.08 respectively, but the ability to use professional knowledge is weak, with an average of 3.87. On the whole, there is still room to improve students' perceived professional skills, especially the ability to use professional knowledge. It can be seen from the investigation and analysis results of practical ability that the average value of overall perception of practical ability is more than 4, which is in a good situation. However, the performance of four aspects of practical ability is unbalanced. The mean value of practical operation ability, problem analysis ability and communication ability are all greater than 4, but the highest mean value is only 4.32, and the average value of applied writing ability is only 3.86. There is still room for improvement in students' practical ability.

**Table 1.** Business administration students perceived professional skills and practical ability

Survey content	mean	mode	minimum value	maximum value
The overall learning effect of specialized courses	4.53	4	2	5
The ability to use professional knowledge	3.87	3	1	5
The ability to use professional teaching software	4.08	4	2	5
The ability to analyze major related problems	4.15	4	2	5
Student practical operation ability	4.32	4	2	5
Student communication skills	4.06	4	2	5
Student applied writing ability	3.86	3	2	5

As can be seen from the investigation and analysis results of the current situation of innovation ability (Table 2 below), students' perceived knowledge base of innovation and entrepreneurship is relatively solid, with an average of 4.71, which may be related to the establishment of compulsory basic entrepreneurship courses and a series of innovation and entrepreneurship elective courses. The mean value of innovative learning ability is 4.06, indicating that students are satisfied with the innovative ability, but students think that their innovative thinking and innovative skills need to be further improved, the mean value is 3.84 and 3.12 respectively. In terms of students' cognitive ability of social responsibility, the overall feeling is not bad, the mean values of the three second-level indicators are all over 4, but the mean values are from 4.01 to 4.06 and then to 4.12, and students' cognitive ability of social responsibility on the whole can be further improved.

**Table 2.** The perceived student innovation ability and social responsibility cognitive ability

Survey content	mean	mode	minimum value	maximum value
Knowledge base of innovation and entrepreneurship	4.71	4	2	5
Perception of innovative thinking	3.84	3	2	5
The Innovation skills perceived	3.12	3	2	4
The innovative learning ability	4.06	4	2	5
The cognitive ability of legal responsibility	4.12	4	2	5
The cognitive ability of ethical responsibility	4.06	4	2	5
The cognitive ability of charitable responsibility	4.01	3	2	5

#### 4.3.2. Existing Problems of Core Competence Cultivation of Business Administration Students

Firstly, the goal of cultivating core competence is not clear yet. According to the investigation and analysis, most students clearly indicated that it is necessary to cultivate and improve their core competence in college, no matter whether they are directly engaged in work, taking public examinations or postgraduate examinations, and it is necessary to improve their professional skills and innovative practical abilities. However, 90% of the students surveyed did not have a clear understanding of the specific abilities of core competence, and the cultivation objectives of core competence were still unclear. Most of the students said that the main task in college is to learn professional courses well, while had little thinking about the connotation of professional skills and other core competencies and how to improve them. School training scheme involves the talent training objectives slightly, but have no explanation of the specific meaning and categories of core competence training in detail. Students know relatively little about it, the overall publicity and explanation is not yet in place, and the students' core competence training objectives of the school are still unclear.

Secondly, the teachers' practical teaching experience is still insufficient, and "double-qualified" teachers are relatively lacking. The cultivation of core competence of business administration students is closely related to teachers. Business administration majors are highly practical majors. The students' ability cultivation of professional knowledge application, practice and innovation is related to teachers' innovative practical teaching capability and experience. Practical teaching can cultivate college students' comprehensive abilities to find, analyze and solve problems. Judging from the practical experience of the existing teaching staff of business administration major in the school, some teachers, especially young teachers, investing in the school teaching as soon as they graduate, lack relevant practical experience of enterprise management, which is not conducive to the in-depth development of professional application and practical teaching. In addition, due to the change of social and economic situation, the proportion of experimental training courses in the talent training scheme of business administration is large. Business administration teachers need to undertake about 10 innovation and entrepreneurship courses, many lectures courses, 3 experimental training courses, and guide the project competition, create projects and so on. However, the teacher training of the course can't be completed in one step, and the weakness of teachers leads to that the practical teaching and the cultivation of students' innovative practical ability and professional knowledge application ability can't achieve the expected results.

According to the survey results of students' practical teaching teachers, students are basically satisfied with the overall teaching level of experimental teaching teachers of college management majors, with an average of 4.03 points respectively. This shows that students' perception of experimental practice course teachers is acceptable, which can meet the needs of practical teaching of business administration as a whole, but there is still some room for



improvement. Another student indicated in the questionnaire that some teachers still need to further improve the practical experience of enterprises; As a whole, the course to promote the cultivation of innovative practical ability and professional skills is few, and with the innovative practice credits increasing, so more courses or competitions with enterprise competition can be offered.

Thirdly, the forms and contents of cultivating core competence of business administration students need to be enriched and improved. As far as the form and content of cultivating core competence of business administration students are concerned, every school teaching link and teaching content both affect the shaping of students' core competence. At present, the main teaching links include the design of practical teaching contents such as discipline competition, graduation practice and practice base practice, the related curriculum setting of professional skills training, the teaching satisfaction of experimental courses, the guidance of ideological and political education to the cultivation of core competence, and the teaching innovation conducive to the cultivation of core competence, etc. According to the survey results of the core competence training forms and contents of business administration students in table 3 below, as far as the cultivation of students' innovative practice ability is concerned, going to the off-campus practice base for the study practice should be an important choice to cultivate students' innovative practice ability. However, at present, the application of the off-campus practice base of business administration mainly focuses on visiting study practice, where the practice forms are diverse but not targeted. For example, the post practice, research practice, summer part-time job practice, and entity-building practice need to be further designed and implemented.

Fourthly, there is a lack of effective integration between students' core competence training methods and teaching resources. There is a lack of effective integration between the existing training methods of students' core competence in business administration majors and the teaching resources they rely on. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate teaching resources and teaching links and optimize the design of students' competence training mode. The interview results of employers also show that in order to cultivate students with outstanding core competence, schools need to attach great importance to the cultivation of students' core competence, make full and efficient use of all links and resources of personnel training, and form the integration effect. There are many ways and contents to cultivate students' core competence, such as experimental teaching, practical teaching, taking part in discipline competitions, graduation practice, writing scientific research papers and reporting scientific research topics, etc. What is the relationship among various ways to cultivate students' core competence, and how to integrate and apply the resources and elements that multi-dimensional core competence cultivation depends on are all problems worthy of further exploration and solution. The survey of business administration students and interviews with employers also show that there are more or less problems in the existing training methods of students' core competence and the effective integration of the teaching resources they rely on, and the core competence teaching resources and related teaching platforms need to be further integrated.

## **5. Strategies to Improve the Core Competence of Business Administration Students**

Combined with the above survey and analysis results and the content of the integrated cultivation mode of business administration students' core competence, this paper puts forward the path and strategic suggestions to improve the core competence of business administration students under the background of the construction of new liberal arts. Specifically include.

### **5.1. Innovation of Education and Teaching Concept of Cultivating Core Competence of Business Administration Students**

The education concept of students' core competence education is the attitude, concept and belief held by educational managers and teachers in carrying out educational and teaching activities. Advanced teaching concept is conducive to students' knowledge mastery and ability shaping. Under the background of the new liberal arts construction in the information technology environment and the cultivation of high-level applied talents, the teaching concept needs to be changed and innovated accordingly. It is necessary to establish the main position of business administration students in education and teaching, and teachers should appropriately guide and assist students to comprehensively improve students' core competencies through various, frequent and multi-channel ability and quality training.

The shaping of college students' core competence needs to establish a new concept of education. The shaping of college students' core competence is an important part of social transformation and development and the cultivation of innovative talents in colleges and universities. In the process of core competence cultivation and education, colleges and universities should adhere to the socialist core values, and cultivate college students' core abilities such as social responsibility cognition, innovation, practice and professional skills, Change the previous practice of only paying attention to the teaching of professional theoretical knowledge and ignoring the forging of students' other core abilities, and enhance the ideological awareness of shaping college students' core abilities. All majors of business administration should be cultivated through the combination of curriculum teaching, practice, scientific research and writing

### **5.2. Improve the Core Competence Training Curriculum System for Business Administration Students**

According to the survey results of the current situation and influencing factors of the core competence of business administration students under the background of new economic management, just over 40% of the students are satisfied with the curriculum related to professional skill training, the overall satisfaction with the content design of practical teaching is general, and only 39% of the students feel satisfied, reflecting the need to further improve the curriculum system related to core competence training. Although the current training scheme for business administration talents has been relatively perfect after several rounds of modification, specific courses can be fine tuned according to the changes in talent demand in the society, and new courses can be opened as needed in terms of open experimental courses. In addition, the new curriculum of talents training program is revised. Professional courses should be characterized by the characteristics of the times, openness, cutting-edge and networking. We should advocate micro education, fragmentation, and apply information technology to teaching, and adopt the characteristics of Internet plus curriculum or intelligence plus curriculum. Some module courses in the talent training program can be updated to make it more conducive to the cultivation of students' core competence. In order to meet the needs of the development of the new liberal arts, the university is currently serving the cultivation of students' core competence by further strengthening the construction of practical courses. The proportion of practical teaching hours of business administration majors has increased, the types of practical courses are richer, and the structure of practical courses is more reasonable. On this basis, we can further strengthen the construction of practical courses, especially experimental courses, and move forward to first-class courses. According to the needs of course teaching and the training objectives of business administration talents, the teaching system of business administration experimental training courses with different advanced training, such as course single experiment, course comprehensive experiment, professional comprehensive

experiment, interdisciplinary comprehensive experiment and innovation and entrepreneurship practice, can be gradually improved

### **5.3. Strengthen the Training of Business Administration Teachers**

According to the survey results of the current situation and influencing factors of business administration students' core competence, about 46% of business administration students are satisfied with the innovation of teachers' teaching methods and teaching means. From the practical experience of the existing teaching staff of business administration, some teachers, especially young teachers, work in the school after graduation. They lack practical experience in enterprise management, which is not conducive to the in-depth development of professional application and practical teaching, and the cultivation of students' innovative practical ability and professional application ability. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the training of business administration teachers, which is conducive to the cultivation of students' core competence. Carry out practical experiments and practical experience training of business management teachers, including organizing experiments, training and teaching seminars, and inviting software companies to train teachers on experimental software; The school sends excellent young and middle-aged teachers to famous schools at home and abroad for research and study in batches and stages or to large and medium-sized enterprises for temporary training, which can not only update teachers' theoretical reserves, but also accumulate rich practical experience; At the same time, managers with rich practical experience in enterprises are selected as part-time teachers of the school, and practical experience is used to supplement theoretical teaching. These works have been carried out in an orderly manner, and the school can promote teacher training in an orderly manner according to the needs of professional talent training.

To strengthen the training of business administration teachers, in addition to the training of teachers' practical experience in management, it is also necessary to strengthen the training in the reform of teaching methods and means. Business administration teachers can strengthen the guidance of students' sense of social responsibility and improve students' cognitive ability of social responsibility through professional ideological and political education and curriculum ideological and political education. The new liberal arts also emphasizes that talent training should focus on improving the ability to analyze problems, and develop towards modeling and measurement. In the current era of information technology and Internet, higher education should be oriented to the Internet, database, cloud computing, big data, artificial intelligence, blockchain, etc. The training of business administration teachers should also strengthen the training of teachers' teaching ability and the application of information technology in teaching, such as MOOC and flipped classroom teaching.

### **5.4. Strengthen the Comprehensive Application of Teaching Resources and Teaching Platform**

According to the investigation on the current situation and influencing factors of business administration students' core competence and the interview results of employers, the existing training methods of students' core competence and the teaching resources they rely on are lack of effective integration. It is necessary to integrate teaching resources and teaching links, strengthen the comprehensive application of teaching resources and teaching platform, and cultivate students' core competence.

According to the existing business administration talent training plan, the teaching links of business administration are: theoretical teaching links of subject basic courses and professional courses, experimental training teaching links, social service practice links, internship teaching links, graduation design or graduation thesis practice links, other practical teaching links, etc. The internship links include course internship, academic year internship and graduation



internship. The social service practice links include professional research, social investigation and other social service practice activities. Other practical teaching links include discipline competition and entrepreneurship and innovation practice. These teaching links run through the undergraduate education stage, and make the connection and cooperation of various practical teaching links through some teaching platforms. These teaching platforms include practice base platforms including school enterprise cooperation bases, experimental training room teaching center platforms, discipline competition and entrepreneurship innovation platforms, and course teaching platforms. Give full play to the role of the platform, integrate various teaching elements through the platform, interact and correlate with each other, so as to make each platform a multi-functional teaching platform for carrying out core competence training activities, and make comprehensive use of these four teaching platforms to cultivate the professional skills, practical ability, innovation ability and social responsibility cognitive ability of business administration students.

Taking the experimental training platform as an example, promote the experimental training teaching with appropriate teaching methods; At the same time, actively use the experimental teaching resources to guide students to participate in various discipline competitions, and give full play to the role of the experimental training platform in the practice of discipline competitions; Establish enterprise simulation operation association and logistics simulation interest group composed of students on the experimental training platform, sand table decision-making interest group and tea art interest group to promote students' independent learning. The function of the experimental training platform extends to professional knowledge, scientific research, innovation and entrepreneurship projects and other links; Further expand the function of the experimental training platform to the practice link; Through the implementation of the substitution rules for undergraduate thesis in business administration, qualified investigation reports, academic papers and competition results can replace undergraduate thesis and extend the function of the experimental training platform to the graduation thesis link. Therefore, the experimental training platform realizes the combination of professional learning, curriculum experiment, curriculum training, practice, discipline competition, graduation thesis and other practical links. Its multi-functional characteristics are obvious. Through the integration of platform and resources, it can comprehensively cultivate the professional skills, practical ability, innovation ability and social responsibility cognitive ability of business administration students.

### **5.5. Three Classes Work Together to Improve Students' Core Competence**

The cultivation of business administration students' core competence needs to link the three classrooms and work in three ways. The first classroom refers to classroom teaching, which is a classroom teaching activity carried out within the specified teaching time according to the teaching materials and syllabus. The first classroom is the basic position for the cultivation of College Students' core competence, and the participants are teachers and students. The second classroom refers to the teaching activities related to the first classroom outside the first classroom, mainly including competitions, lectures and other campus cultural activities. The participants are mainly students, supplemented by counselors, teachers and experts in the industry. The third classroom generally refers to practical teaching, including scientific research, market research and enterprise practice. Although the participants in the third classroom are mainly students, the help and support of teachers are indispensable. The cultivation of business administration students' core competence cannot be completed only in the first classroom. The cultivation process of students' core competence generally presents the division of three roles of "teachers' teaching, students' learning and counselor management", which runs through the three classrooms and needs three classroom linkage.

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