

A Study on Course Design of Career Development and Employment Guidance for Foreign Language University Students under the Mode of Blending Teaching

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Abstract

This paper demonstrates the current situation of teaching the course of College Students Career Development and Employment Guidance, and illustrates the reform objectives from the perspectives of teachers, students and course. A systematic teaching implementation scheme is displayed to offer a new lens of teaching the course. The study aims to propose a course design to improve teaching effectiveness of the course and college students' career decision making under the mode of blending teaching.

Keywords

Blending Teaching; Course Design; Career Development and Employment Guidance.

1. Introduction

The Ministry of Education required that all colleges and universities set up compulsory career courses from 2008 [1], and all higher education institutes provide students with six parts of career education and guidance—career planning awareness, self career development, employment enhancement, guidance for job-hunting, occupation adaptation and development, and entrepreneurship education [2]. However, most universities focus heavily on students' signing employment contracts, the career guidance course does not draw much attention to students' career development which helps them with self-understanding and occupational exploration. Moreover, the career guidance course is usually taught by administrative staff. It is widely accepted that administrative staff in Chinese higher education shoulder considerable work burden in terms of student affairs, moral education, psychological counseling, party and youth league activities and so forth [3]. Based on a few training lectures on career development, they are not seemingly capable of conducting professional career counseling, and it is more likely that the quality of career development course may not meet its designed purpose. On the other hand, it is common to see that most students have a vague or general career plan upon graduation [4]—either choosing further education or joining job market; however, only a few students would like to take a deeper thought of what occupation they are going to pursue in the future and make career decision in accordance with their career goal. Provided with four-year career development course, why do students still lack the clarity in career decision making? With the national emphasis placed on career development and employment guidance for college students, it is manifest that the significance of career course should receive extensive attention and more efforts should be spared to improve the quality of career course in terms of its delivery manner and content.

2. Reform Proposal

2.1. Reform Objectives

In terms of teachers, they can 1) reduce the burden of teaching career development theories and provide online access for students to browse the key notes off class by establishing an

online course; 2) be informed of students' career planning updates by checking their online career development profiles and feedback reports of career activities, based on the given information, teachers are more likely to offer specific teaching content instead of invariably general course materials to all students; 3) have a comprehensive grasp of students' ideological and psychological trends and provide more customized career guidance by managing students' online career planning profiles.

With respect to students, they are expected to 1) demonstrate initiatives in career courses with a systematic and comprehensive learning of career planning in theory and practice; 2) have a better perception of their career traits and employment environment with the feedback of online professional assessment softwares and the experience of practical career activities; 3) lay a foundation for future career choices with a clear awareness of their career interests and employment directions.

In light of the course, 1) it should be set up every semester as career planning is a step-by-step process, thus students' consistency in career planning can be sustained and achieved to a desirable outcome. 2) A formative feedback should be illustrated to students in terms of their career planning updates and their career activities so that students are well-informed of their career planning progress and areas for improvement. 3) In the "internet plus" era, an online course should be established to provide course content preview, professional self-assessment software and so forth, and students can expand their professional horizon in-depth and lay a solid foundation for future career choices.

2.2. Blending Teaching Reform

The blending teaching reform of this course is divided into two aspects: theory teaching and practice teaching. As for the former part, the establishment of an online course provides students with systematic and comprehensive theoretical knowledge of career planning and relevant career information of the current workplace. Colleges are encouraged to present a more specific introduction of the employment prospect in accordance with their majors. The introduction of online professional self-assessment tools such as MBTI career personality test and Holland's career interest test will significantly help students achieve a clearer understanding of their career traits and make informed occupational choices accordingly [5, 6]. Students can not only benefit from the test feedback from career assessment tools in terms of their personal career traits, teachers are also better-informed of students' personal characteristics and offer corresponding career advice and guidance based on test results. In addition, the establishment of an online interactive conversation platform among students, teachers and career counselors provides students with an opportunity to communicate with relevant teachers or counselors about specific career questions.

In regard to practical teaching, certain career activities will be arranged each semester to prepare students keep pace with the current employment information updates, and the online feedback reports are required to record their reflections on attending job fairs, listening to lectures given by guest speakers, or interviewing professionals and so forth. By keeping a regular account of career activities, students undoubtedly equip themselves with pragmatic first-hand occupational information, which provides them a clearer vision to navigate through career choices. Moreover, with the online access to students' career development planning and reflectional reports of career activities, teachers are better-informed of students' gains and concerns of career planning and can offer career advice with specific focuses. The online records not only present students with a more comprehensive perspective of their career planning progress, and facilitate teachers to master students' career profiles and conduct the course teaching more effectively.

3. Course Design

3.1. Implementation Scheme

To establish an online career course with disciplinary focus in each college. Based on the fundamental career development theories explanation, the introduction of employment trends and prospect will enrich the course content and present students with a practical view toward future employment.

To set up an interactive online communication platform for teachers, students and career counselors. The establishment of such platform facilitates students to get instant and professional career feedback from relevant teachers and career counselling practitioners.

To introduce online professional career assessment software. It is not only convenient for students to check their self-assessment results and suggestions of occupational choices, but also feasible for teachers to get an overall grasp of students' career traits.

To run a systematic management of students' career planning profiles and give instant and personalized feedback. The submission of online career development files offers teachers with a fuller vision of students' career traits and personal updates, which also helps teachers to form a formative evaluation of students' performance.

To make a consistent and incremental course arrangement each semester. Students' career planning should follow the basic process of self- exploration, occupational exploration, career decision making guidance, career decision and career commitment. Therefore, the teaching content sequence should be adjusted to the process of career exploration.

To implement the operational requirements and procedures of offline teaching practice. The offline practice teaching should be conducted with specific requirements, for instance, an occupational interview should be conducted in a semi-structured manner and students are required to write a report based on the occupational feedback they get from the professionals they interviewed to see if their traits match with job requirements.

To give timely feedback of students' online career planning files and career activities' feedback reports. Teachers' comments present feedback from a different perspective for students to know their personal traits, and the account of students' online career information also provides teachers to give a formative evaluation objectively.

3.2. Course Proposal

Based on the aforementioned blending teaching reform proposal, a summary of the course proposal is illustrated as follows, see Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Course Proposal

Semester	Teachers	Students	Formative Tasks
1	To conduct general introduction of career development theories	To meet with outstanding alumni and build up basic concept of career planning	To write a proposal of four-year career development plans
2	To provide guidance to help students perceive a better image of personal career traits	To finish online career self-assessments and receive feedback from peers to have a clear awareness of career traits	To finish an online reflection report based on the self-assessment tools and peer feedback
3	To combine career theories with major learning, and provide guidance of occupational information	To visit on-campus job fairs and interview professionals to have a better idea of occupational environment	To write an online reflection report on job fair and interview, and to revise career plans
4	To illustrate guidance of innovation and entrepreneurship	To participate in career planning contests, to visit entrepreneurship incubators	To finish an online reflection report on social work, or to submit an entrepreneurship proposal
5	To inform students of employment trends and policies and give employment guidance	To attend job fairs on campus or other places to have a basic perception of employment trends	To write an online reflection report on job fairs
6	To offer guidance of setting up career goals and navigating career choices	To attend social work of all aspects and get updated with different work positions	To write an online report on social work or summer internship
7	To demonstrate a close-up guidance of employment trends, policies and preparations	To attend on-campus job fairs or company interviews to have a direct perception of employment requirements	To prepare resume and make plans of job application
8	To introduce employment rights and duties, to elaborate employment honesty and integrity	To join career tutoring program and have a deeper idea of employment policies	To finish internship report

4. Conclusion

In general, the study proposes a course design of career development and employment guidance under blending teaching mode. In terms of career planning guidance, the establishment of online course not only presents students access to overview information of theory in each chapter, it also offers professional self-assessment tools to help students better informed of their career traits based on the test results and occupational recommendation in accordance with their characteristics. The online communication channels pave the platform for students to contact relevant teachers and career counselling practitioners for professional advice concerning their career questions. With respect to the course management, the accounts of students' online career development profiles benefit not only students for a systematic presentation of their career planning records and progress, but also offers teachers with a comprehensive grasp of students career traits and their career planning updates, which will significantly facilitate teachers in choosing lecturing direction with a practical focus, and give

formative evaluation with a more objective and comprehensive stand. As for practice teaching, students are expected to explore a variety of career choices they would like to consider upon graduation. The collection of occupational information from the career activities they attended also provides them with a first-hand knowledge of current employment trends and requirements, which prepares students to make better-informed career decision making afterwards.

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