

A Discussion on the Challenges and Measures for the Reform of Legal Education in Colleges and Universities in the Era of “Internet +”

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Abstract: With the further promotion and deepening of the reform of quality education, teachers at all levels are actively involved in the work of improving the curriculum, enriching the teaching content, and innovating the teaching methods, and law teachers in colleges and universities are no exception. In order to implement the reform of quality education, teachers need to adopt novel and effective teaching methods to design teaching models and carry out teaching activities. Since the advent of the internet era, advanced educational technology has shown remarkable application achievements in education. Therefore, teachers must actively explore the application opportunities and implementation strategies of information technology in legal education, so as to achieve the desired educational outcomes. One of the pressing issues faced by law teachers is how to achieve the aforementioned educational objectives, in which this paper will focus on.

Keywords: Internet +; Colleges and universities; Reform in legal education; Challenges; Countermeasures

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1. Introduction

In the context of “Internet +,” law teachers in colleges and universities should make full use of this advantage to optimize educational outcomes. However, due to the limitation and influence of internal and external factors, there are still many challenges in the process of introducing information technology into classroom teaching, which virtually affects the steady improvement of the teaching quality^[1]. In view of this, law teachers should make corresponding reforms, look for effective measures to integrate information technology, use information technology to optimize the effectiveness in teaching, construct an efficient classroom, as well as help students consolidate basic knowledge and practical skills, so as to effectively improve the quality of classroom teaching and supply high-quality legal talents for social development and national construction. Based on teaching experiences, this paper analyzes the challenges faced by the reform of legal education in colleges and universities in the era of “Internet +” and proposes practical measures to provide effective reference and ideas for law teachers in colleges and universities.

2. Challenges in the reform of legal education in colleges and universities in the era of “Internet +”

2.1. Insufficient cultivation of practical skills

Education and teaching at home and abroad have achieved certain educational outcomes, but combined with practical research, there are many problems in the practical teaching process, such as prioritizing theory over practical aspects. In this context, there is an imbalance in theoretical and practical teaching,

which is not conducive to students' overall development ^[2]. Furthermore, some law teachers have cognitive bias and believe that the purpose of basic legal education is to help students acquire and internalize theoretical knowledge. Since teachers do not actively carry out practical teaching activities, students' problem-solving and practical inquiry skills cannot be developed ^[3]. Therefore, although some law graduates possess a high level of knowledge, they often struggle to adapt to social life and their jobs due to the lack of practical skills, which ultimately limits their ability to advance further.

2.2. Outdated teaching methods

In colleges and universities, legal education is often based on teaching materials. Due to the limitations of conventional thinking, many teachers are still employing traditional teaching methods and merely reproducing materials verbatim, thus making it difficult to motivate students to participate in classroom learning, and ultimately failing to achieve the expected educational outcomes ^[4]. The majority of law teachers are fresh graduates and have not held employment in the front lines of practice. Therefore, they generally lack working experience although equipped with solid legal knowledge. They often employ the "preaching—" or "cramming—style" teaching method to impart theoretical knowledge to students. Over time, this single teaching approach will cause the classroom to lose its vibrancy, and thus making it dull.

2.3. Lacking emphasis on related disciplines

Based on actual practical teaching experiences, the majority of law majors in many colleges and universities belong to an independent teaching mode, and they do not have any systematic or comprehensive subject teaching system. This leaves a negative impact on daily teaching and poses a challenge for students to develop an ideal knowledge system under the guidance of teachers ^[5]. Hence, when solving practical problems, students will only use legal knowledge, since employing other related contents are foreign to them. The failure of colleges and universities to emphasize on the teaching of related disciplines is the root cause of this situation. Teachers do not devote much time or effort to teaching related disciplines since they feel that teaching theoretical courses is sufficient in and of itself.

3. Measures for the reform of legal education in colleges and universities in the era of "Internet +"

3.1. Reconstructing the curriculum system

Generally speaking, the curriculum of legal education in colleges and universities can be divided into the following domains: basic knowledge, time skills, professional knowledge, and humanistic knowledge. In order to further improve students' practical skills and innovative consciousness, teachers should reconstruct the curriculum system in line with the development trend of modern education and teaching, so as to supply high-quality legal talents for social development and national construction. In view of this, teachers should not only impart basic knowledge and teach students practical skills, but also focus on cultivating their quality skills and subject literacy, so as to nurture compound talents needed for social development ^[6]. First of all, it is necessary to increase the proportion of elective courses. With the continuous innovation and development of the legal industry, there is an urgent need for compound talents. Hence, students should not only familiarize themselves with legal knowledge, but also develop a foundational understanding of economy, foreign language, and management. In view of this, colleges and universities also need to emphasize on economic and foreign language courses in carrying out legal education and teaching, so as to promote students' overall development. Second, it is necessary to exercise students' oral English skills. Teachers should encourage students to browse the internet to obtain rich and high-quality foreign language learning materials, so as to master basic oral skills through various novel ways. Third, it is necessary to improve students' information retrieval and screening skills. As law students, they need to master basic legal retrieval skills. By introducing various legal cases in teaching activities and encouraging students to

explore and analyze the contents of these cases, students' information analysis and integration skills, along with their legal retrieval skills can be improved. In this process, teachers should comprehensively analyze and judge the contents of these cases and extract key information, so as to ultimately improve the efficiency of case investigation. In order to do that, teachers need to further expand their knowledge framework, optimize the curriculum, and create a supportive environment for law teaching activities.

3.2. Emphasizing on the cultivation of practical skills

In order to effectively improve students' practical skills, teachers should boldly introduce various effective and novel teaching methods. First, teachers can use the case teaching method. This method requires teachers to collect high-quality case materials in the pre-class preparation stage and then introduce them to the classroom, giving students sufficient time for independent learning and cooperative exploration, so as to answer the questions and carry out the tasks given ^[7]. Generally speaking, by guiding students to analyze and learn a large number of legal cases, this would expose students to different types of cases and effectively make up for knowledge loopholes and skill weaknesses. Moreover, by effectively improving their logical thinking and case-solving skills, students' practical skills can be improved, while stimulating their practical potential and steadily promoting the reform of legal education. On the other hand, teachers can also use the clinical legal education method, in which legal education can be effectively integrated with basic literacy and quality skills in line with the practical requirements of legal professional posts. In this method, practical teaching plans and teaching links should be formulated. Teachers should first encourage students to carry out in-depth discussions and cooperative exploration on certain cases in class, so as to apply their legal knowledge and practical skills to these cases, as well as improve their internalization and migration skills. Through practical teaching experiences, teachers have achieved remarkable educational outcomes by introducing the clinical legal education method. This provides new ideas for teachers to innovate teaching methods, so as to consolidate students' basic knowledge, exercise their case handling skills, and eventually promote the reform of legal education.

3.3. Strengthening ideological and moral education

In the practical teaching process, law teachers in colleges and universities should not only focus on completing the basic teaching task, but also undertake the task of cultivating students' moral quality and improving their legal awareness and political quality ^[8]. According to the current development ^[8] of the legal industry, it is evident that after graduation, law students will indefinitely be enticed by interests to engage in various legal affairs, which would eventually infringe on the interests of the general public. Students should be fully aware that this behavior is morally repugnant. Therefore, in legal education, teachers should integrate ideological and moral education into daily teaching, so that students would gain some understanding of advanced legal knowledge, which aims to maintain social order and people's interests, thus preventing law students from going astray and committing illegal acts for personal interests ^[9]. By incorporating ideological and political education into legal education, students can be nurtured into socially developed talents who will contribute to the prosperity and strength of the country.

3.4. Improving the framework of teachers

Colleges and universities should acknowledge that the professional quality, professional level, and teaching experience of law teachers have a significant impact on the teaching quality of these courses. In order to further improve the framework of teachers, colleges and universities should introduce the tutor system. The implementation of this system has a significant role in improving the basic level and professional skills of students, as well as in laying a solid foundation for further development ^[10]. These tutors should provide students with professional and objective guidance and tap into their research potential, so as to cultivate

proper learning habits and rectify wrong behaviors among students, thus expanding their cognitive vision and enriching their knowledge system. Alternatively, qualified colleges and universities can also construct a “double tutor” team, comprising of theoretical tutors and practical tutors, who are mainly responsible for teaching students advanced theories and training their practical skills while providing them with practical guidance, respectively. In this way, schools will be able to provide students with comprehensive and professional guidance and help. By promoting the double tutor system, schools can further optimize the allocation of resources, improve the classroom setting, and enhance students’ basic understanding level and practical skills, so as to facilitate their adaptation to future jobs.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, in order to adapt to the development trend of modern education and teaching, law teachers in colleges and universities should comply with the curriculum reform, further optimize the curriculum, innovate teaching methods, and enrich the teaching content. They should also put forward novel and effective teaching measures from the perspective of the internet, such as reconstructing the curriculum system, paying attention to the cultivation of practical skills, strengthening ideological and moral education, as well as improving the construction of teaching staff. All these would help students consolidate basic knowledge and master practical skills, as well as improve their professional quality and legal professional skills, while promoting the development of legal education.

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Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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