

# On the Application of Case Teaching Method to the Professional Teaching of Legal Affairs

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**Abstract:** Legal affairs major is an applied and practical one. Since the reform and opening up in China, the education of legal affairs major tends to pay more attention to theory teaching, while the practical ability training of students majored in legal affairs tends to be neglected. Therefore, how to attach importance to the theory teaching of legal affairs, strengthen the practical links of teaching, and improve the practical ability of college students' legal affairs profession are important issues in the professional education of legal affairs. Case teaching method plays an irreplaceable role in the completion of this subject. At present, many colleges and universities in China, especially higher vocational colleges, actively advocate the use of case teaching method in the teaching of legal affairs, actively explore the theoretical and practical means of case teaching method, and carry out in-depth reform of classroom teaching method, thus effectively improving students' professional competence and quality of legal affairs during college, which will certainly have a far-reaching impact on China's professional education of legal affairs. This paper intends to analyze and sort out the problems related to case teaching method in the teaching of legal affairs in higher vocational colleges, with a view to achieving some research progress.

## 1. Introduction

Legal affairs is a practical subject. Higher vocational education pays more attention to the cultivation of students' practical ability. Therefore, based on appropriate and sufficient theory explanation, the teaching of legal affairs courses in higher vocational colleges should be organically combined with case analysis in order to better train and exercise students' practical operation ability. Case teaching method is very important. It focuses on integrating theory with practice, and takes the cultivation of students' ability as the core. As an effective teaching method in the teaching of legal affairs, it pays attention to the interaction between teachers and students.

## 2. Characteristics of Case Teaching Method of Legal Affairs Major

The so-called case teaching method is a kind of teaching method which takes the problems that have happened or may happen in the future as a case form to let learners analyze and study, and puts forward various solutions to problems, so as to improve learners' ability to solve practical problems. Case teaching method of legal affairs major is an active teaching method, which takes the cultivation of students' abilities as the core and cultivate legal affairs professionals with comprehensive abilities. There are three characteristics.

(1) Students are in the dominant position in the process of case teaching. Our traditional teaching of legal affairs still focuses on concepts, characteristics, legal affairs regulations and so on. It leads students into the misunderstanding of rote memorization, so their ability to analyze and solve problems can not be trained and exercised. Compared with the traditional classroom teaching method, case teaching method is a kind of guiding and heuristic teaching method. Students are the main body of classroom while the role of teachers is to organize the classroom, guide discussion, and put forward cases closely related to the teaching content before or during the lecture, so that students are able to think with questions, give full play to students' initiative, make their thinking in a positive state, get the corresponding answers after thinking, and establish self-confidence and sense of achievement in the process.

(2) Teacher-student relationship is a kind of “teacher-student complementarity and a win-win situation in teaching and learning”. This teaching method encourages students to actively participate in teaching activities and give full play to their initiative in understanding, analyzing cases and classroom discussion. Teachers guide students to apply professional knowledge of legal affairs they have already mastered in class. Through communication and discussion in class, students inspire each other and improve themselves together. In the process of discussion, teachers make targeted summaries and comments on the problems exposed by students, which not only highlights the teaching focus, but also solves the problems that are difficult to find in peacetime, so as to better achieve teaching purpose.

(3) Teachers and students are equal, making democratic classroom atmosphere prominent. The implementation of case teaching fully reflects the dominant position of teachers and subject status of students, change teachers’ leading position in traditional teaching and the current situation in which students are in a passive acceptance of knowledge, and achieve the equality between teachers and students in the process of teaching activities. Both teachers and students are free to express and debate based on cases, fully state reasons, and clarify their views. With the deepening of the discussion, the understanding of problems will be more deeply and achieve better teaching effect.

### **3. Basic Overview of Case Teaching Method**

#### **3.1 Main Characteristics of Case Teaching Method**

(1) It is a heuristic teaching method. Case teaching method is a method to guide and inspire students to focus on the positive thinking. Chinese traditional teaching method of legal affairs is that teachers teach while students just listen and take notes in class and read notes or books after class. Then there will be examinations. It leads students’ learning to go into the error of examination oriented education. Their understanding and application ability tend to be very poor. The implementation of case teaching method will change, in the process of teaching, the passive situation in which teachers teach while students just listen and take notes. Knowledge and ability training are organically combined. Teachers are required to put forward the case closely related with teaching contents in the teaching process for students to think, to inspire students to always maintain a positive state of mind, to guide students to use their brains, and get answer by thinking.

(2) It is a kind of participatory teaching method. Case teaching method stresses the participation of students, and cultivate students’ consciousness and participation ability. Legal affairs major, especially that in higher vocational colleges, should cultivate students to possess a solid professional theoretical foundation of legal affairs and have a practical ability and the ability to work required in professional occupation, demanding the combination of theory and practice. Case teaching method can better implement the principle of integrating theory with practice. Because teachers are allowed to use the case as an intermediary in the process of teaching, so that students are put in the specific practice. Therefore, students’ sense of participation, initiative and enthusiasm have been greatly brought into play. This method not only makes students better grasp basic theories and system of legal affairs, but also effectively cultivates students’ ability to solve practical problems with knowledge.

#### **3.2 Several Models of Case Teaching Method**

(1) Task-based teaching. Teachers choose one or several typical cases, and then put forward questions or tasks for students to carry out discussion or practice in the classroom. The objective is to discuss the case, so that students are able to learn the relevant legal affairs knowledge, and more importantly, learn how to apply the law to handle the case or even find or know the legislative defects in our country. Task-based teaching is usually carried out as follows. Firstly, teachers present one or more typical cases, from which problems or tasks are put forward for students. Then teachers let the whole class discuss (discussion is allowed to take a lot of different forms), especially encourage students to speak freely, dare to put forward different opinions and propositions, stimulate the enthusiasm of students to speak, and even encourage students to carry

out debate, so as to improve their ability to think independently. Finally, teachers summarize and review the views of students and express their own views, so that students' ideas can be clarified, the knowledge is consolidated and their ability can be improved.

(2) Trial probation. This mode is a practical teaching form widely used in the teaching of legal affairs in colleges and universities. That is to say, colleges and courts cooperate in teaching. Students are organized to listen to some typical or difficult cases in court, aiming to enable students to fully understand various litigation procedures, to observe the skills of judges in handling cases and to master the professional competence to deal legal affairs in court proceedings. At the end of each internship, students are to be asked to talk about their perception and experience. Then teachers make a summary and comment, so that their knowledge and ability can meet the actual needs of legal construction.

(3) Moot court. Quality education requires to pay attention to training students' practical ability. However, in China's higher education, it is general that students' practical ability is too poor. Students majored in law are no exception. While it is very important to improve the practical operation ability of students majoring in legal affairs in higher vocational colleges. Since the legal affairs talents we have trained are senior talents specializing in solving practical problems, so it is necessary to focus on training the practical application and operation of legal affairs rules of these students. Case teaching of moot court trial is just a good classroom to cultivate students' practical ability to operate legal affairs. If trial probation is limited to seeing, understanding and recognizing, it is a comprehensive "exercise" in which students integrate into moot lawsuit activities as a whole, experience various litigation roles, and test their mastery of legal affairs knowledge and the cultivation of their professional ability in legal affairs.

#### **4. Role of Case Teaching Method in Legal Affairs Major**

##### **4.1 Stimulate Students' Interest in Learning and Cultivate Students' Ability**

Students' interest in learning depends largely on whether the instructional design is related to them. Among students majoring in legal affairs in higher vocational colleges, some are not interested enough in learning and not motivated enough to study on their own initiative. Case teaching can simulate real or similar real cases in front of students, so that students can participate in different roles, which is helpful to stimulate their interest in learning. At the same time, case teaching attaches importance to the process of students' analysis and problem solving, and advocates the training of logical thinking such as multi-directional thinking, directional thinking and divergent thinking. Therefore, students' thinking ability can be fully trained.

##### **4.2 Improve Students' Ability to Analyze and Solve Practical Problems**

The traditional teaching method focuses on the teaching of knowledge in textbooks and emphasizes the degree of mastery of concepts, principles, characteristics and legal provisions, but ignores the cultivation of students' learning ability, which leads to the disconnection between theory and practice and poor practical ability of students. Case teaching attaches great importance to the cultivation of students' practical ability, so that they are able to apply theory in a specific simulated situation. Under the situation in which students do not have practical experience, according to some inadequate information, making understanding and judgment of complex and changeable cases is conducive to improving their ability to analyze and solve practical problems.

##### **4.3 Cultivate Students' Team Consciousness and Cooperation Ability**

In the case teaching of legal affairs major, through conscious guidance, teachers let students collect and collate information and make analysis and judgment through individual or group cooperation. In this learning environment, students not only establish self-concept and learn to be responsible for themselves, but also learn how to cooperate, communicate and listen with others, and cultivate students' team consciousness and cooperation ability.

#### **4.4 Improve Teachers' Practical Teaching Ability**

Case teaching method puts forward higher requirements for teachers' comprehensive quality. First of all, it is essential to be familiar with the basic theories of this major, the basic theories of this course and provisions of legal affairs. Only when the theoretical knowledge system is perfect, can students' interest in learning is stimulated. Secondly, teachers are required to have abundant judicial practice experience and practical teaching ability, be able to obtain first-hand teaching materials in in-depth practice, and combine theory with practice organically. Through a large number of real and vivid cases, case teaching achieves its due effect without causing the disconnection between theory and practice. Of course, if conditions permit, case teaching takes the form of combining "inviting in" and "going out". Legal practitioners with rich practical experience are suggested to be invited to the stage to introduce their experience and discuss the case "going out" together, which means organizing teachers and students to participate in judicial practice activities such as on-the-spot investigation of courts and trial of court cases, so as to further understand the theory of learning and enhance perceptual recognition.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Case teaching method plays an irreplaceable role in strengthening the professional ability of students majoring legal affairs, such as integration of theory with practice, legal thinking and legal operation. The curriculum development in the learning field based on working process has gradually become the dominant trend in the curriculum reform of higher vocational education. How to use advanced teaching methods to map the typical work tasks in the field of vocational action to learning content in the field of learning is the key point in the whole development process. In this key link, finding a suitable teaching method becomes the "golden key" to open the door. Therefore, how to give full play to the positive role of case teaching method in higher vocational law education should be studied in depth.

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