

# Exploring the Reform and Innovation of Western Economics Curriculum under the Cultivation Mode of Applied Undergraduate Talents

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## Abstract

With the rapid development of China's economy and the strengthening of the trend of globalization, the cultivation of applied management talents with a global vision and innovative ability has become an important task in today's higher education. In this context, it is of great significance to introduce Western economics into China's higher education curriculum. However, there are some problems with the current Western economics courses in China's higher education, such as difficult and boring course content, a disconnection between theory and practice, a lack of interdisciplinary and comprehensive ability cultivation, and single and traditional teaching methods. To solve these problems, strategies can be adopted to restructure the course content and optimize the teaching methods. This includes increasing empirical research and case studies, introducing problem-oriented and inquiry-based learning, conducting practical teaching and field trips, as well as strengthening teacher training and student support measures. Through these reform measures, the quality of the Western Economics course can be improved, and applied talents more adapted to practical needs can be trained.

## Keywords

Applied undergraduate; Western economics; curriculum reform.

## 1. Introduction

With the rapid development of China's economy, China's market economy has gradually developed towards the trend of globalization. In this context, the idea of a socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics has become the core concept of China's economic development, which also requires more applied management talents with a global vision and innovative ability. Therefore, the cultivation of applied undergraduate talents has become an important task in current higher education. As the main force for the cultivation of applied talents, applied colleges and universities are an important fulcrum of the high-quality education system, an important base for the integration of industry and education, and an important node to support national scientific and technological self-reliance and improvement. The theoretical system of Western economics, widely used and verified in various fields around the world, provides strong support from basic principles of economics to actual economic policies. Therefore, introducing Western economics into China's higher education curriculum can not only help students better understand advanced economic theories but also cultivate a more comprehensive international perspective, and improve their innovation and competitiveness. However, there are some problems with the Western economics program in China's current higher education system. One of the main problems is the disconnection between theory and practice. Because of the differences between China's economic development mode and that of

Western countries, it is not enough to master the theoretical system of Western economics, but it is also necessary to combine it with the actual situation of China to better provide useful experience and inspiration for the development of China's economy.

## **2. The Current Situation and Problems of Western Economics Courses under the Training Mode of Applied Undergraduate Talents**

### **2.1. Difficult and complex curriculum**

The Western economics course is a theoretical system of economics with difficult and complex theoretical content. This course requires students to master a large amount of theoretical knowledge and basic mathematical and statistical knowledge, such as calculus, linear algebra, and probability theory. These contents put relatively high demands on students' learning ability and hands-on ability. In addition, due to the wide coverage of theoretical content in Western economics, students need to learn a large number of concepts, theories, and analytical methods. These contents are often abstract and lack concrete practical examples, making it difficult for students to apply them to actual economic problems. The course content of Western economics is relatively boring. Students need to learn a large amount of theoretical knowledge and concepts, which often lack interest and fail to stimulate students' learning interest. This may lead to a decrease in their ability to understand and memorize the course content and adversely affect their academic performance and interest.

### **2.2. The disconnect between theory and practice**

The Western economics courses of some universities in the higher education sector have a big difference between theoretical education and practical education, leading to a disconnection between them. The teaching content of Western economics courses mainly focuses on the narration of economic theory and lacks practical content. Teachers emphasize the study and analysis of economic theories more, neglecting the application and solution of practical problems. This makes it difficult for many students to understand the connection between economic theory and practical application when learning theoretical knowledge. With the rapid development of China's economy, the theoretical system of Western economics has also been challenged to a certain extent. Due to the unique characteristics of China's economic development model, some theories of Western economics may not be applicable in practice. Therefore, students not only need to master the theoretical system of Western economics but also need to combine it with the actual situation in China to provide useful experience and inspiration for the development of China's economy.

### **2.3. Lack of interdisciplinary and integrative capacity development**

As application-oriented talents, students need to possess multifaceted skills and abilities. However, the current Western economics courses only focus on students' mastery of economic theories and lack the cultivation of interdisciplinary and comprehensive abilities. In curriculum design, many Western economics courses only focus on single economic theories and models, lacking a thematic framework for the entire course. In addition, economics requires the integrated use of various knowledge and skills in real-world applications. It requires the ability to analyze data and statistics, understand the impact of government policies and regulations, and consider the impact of social and psychological factors on economic behavior, among other things. However, traditional economics courses often lack the cultivation and training of these comprehensive abilities, making it difficult to improve student's learning outcomes and develop their comprehensive abilities.

## **2.4. Monotony and tradition in teaching methods**

The current Western economics courses suffer from the problem of singularity and tradition in teaching methods.[1] Traditional economics classroom teaching is often lecture-based, focusing on indoctrination and students' passive acceptance. This traditional teaching method lacks interaction and practice, which fails to stimulate students' learning interest and motivation and also hinders the cultivation of their innovative thinking and problem-solving ability, affecting their learning effectiveness. In addition to the singularity of teaching methods, the teaching content of Western economics courses tends to focus only on traditional economic theories and models, emphasizing the basic theories and models of microeconomics and macroeconomics, while ignoring the development and progress of other schools and perspectives. This conventionality may limit students' understanding and mastery of the diversity and complexity of the field of economics. Moreover, traditional economics classroom teaching tends to focus only on the teacher's explanation and students' listening, lacking diverse teaching methods and activities. This leads to students being prone to learning fatigue and boredom, which affects their understanding and application of economics knowledge.

## **3. Strategies and Methods of Western Economics Curriculum Reform under the Cultivation Mode of Applied Undergraduate Talents**

### **3.1. Restructuring and optimization of course content**

The Western economics course needs to restructure and optimize its content to meet practical needs.[2] First, innovation can be improved by strengthening case teaching. The use of vivid and interesting cases can mobilize students' learning enthusiasm and improve the learning effect. Case teaching deepens the understanding of economics theory and helps students understand economic phenomena in real life.[3] Through case studies, students can combine abstract economic theories with practical situations, enabling them to better understand and apply what they have learned. Case studies provide concrete examples that allow students to visualize the application of economic theories in reality. By analyzing real cases, students can understand the flexibility and applicability of economic theories and apply them to different situations. Secondly, empirical research provides students with evidence to verify the rationality and accuracy of economic theories. By analyzing economic data and conducting empirical research, students can gain a deeper understanding of the actual effects of economic theories and think critically about and evaluate them. By strengthening case and empirical research in economics teaching, students can improve their innovation ability, develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, understand the importance and application areas of economics, and prepare for their future careers.

### **3.2. Innovation and diversification of teaching methods**

Diversified teaching methods and activities can be introduced into the teaching process of Western economics to increase students' interest in learning and improve their application ability. In the teaching process, the four links of "pre-course guidance, classroom lectures, group discussions, post-course planning, and design" can be followed, and accompanying tests can be increased. This forms a student-centered, teacher-driven, combination of lectures and practice, learning and application of the teaching atmosphere.[4] Teaching methods such as case studies, group discussions, role-play, practical projects, and simulation experiments can be used to engage students in the classroom, encourage active thinking and interaction, and promote analytical and problem-solving abilities. Furthermore, modern technology can be utilized for teaching. Network platforms, multimedia teaching tools, and online learning platforms can be used to extend teaching time and space, stimulate students' learning interests and motivation, and provide interactive communication platforms among students and between students and

teachers. [5] By introducing diversified teaching methods and activities and utilizing modern technology, students' learning interests and motivation can be stimulated, and their innovative thinking and problem-solving abilities can be cultivated.

### **3.3. Teacher training and student support measures**

Teachers are the promoters and implementers of curriculum reform, and they need professional development training to improve their teaching level and ability to innovate teaching methods. Teacher training can include updating and deepening subject knowledge, research and practice of teaching methods, and teaching techniques and applications of case and empirical studies. Teachers can participate in academic research and exchange activities to improve their academic level and teaching ability. Additionally, a teaching incentive mechanism can be established to motivate teachers to actively participate in teaching training and improve their teaching standards. Furthermore, student guidance and support services need to be strengthened. Schools can provide study counseling, career planning, psychological counseling, and other services to help students solve problems and promote their overall development. Academic seminars, lectures, and practical work such as economics laboratories and data analysis software can be offered to facilitate students' access to learning materials and independent learning. Strengthening teacher training and student support measures can enhance the quality of education and ensure students' success.

### **3.4. Increase extracurricular practical programs**

Improving students' practical ability is crucial in the applied undergraduate talent cultivation model. Interdisciplinary integration and innovation should be emphasized, and the cultivation of students' practical ability and innovation ability should be strengthened to better adapt to social demand and the requirements of higher education reform. To achieve this, schools should improve the mechanism of student practice. School-enterprise cooperation can be established to provide internships and practice opportunities, allowing students to apply theories to practical situations. Simulated practical training bases can be established to simulate real working environments and situations, enabling students to carry out practical operations and training. Practical courses can be set up for students to exercise their practical skills through real projects and case studies, with professional teachers providing guidance and assessment. By providing practical opportunities and establishing practical training bases, students' practical ability and employment competitiveness can be enhanced. Schools should also maintain good relationships with enterprises and related industries to provide students with more practical opportunities and resource support.

## **4. Summary**

The curriculum construction of Western economics is a long-term process that requires continuous efforts and external support. There are many problems with the curriculum of Western economics in applied undergraduate colleges and universities. The difficulty and boredom of the curriculum, the disconnection between theory and practice, the lack of interdisciplinary and comprehensive ability cultivation, and the singularity of teaching methods all affect students' understanding and application of Western economics. Therefore, it is urgent to reform and innovate the curriculum. By combining China's actual situation with Western economics, a more innovative, flexible, and practical curriculum system can be created. The focus should be on reforming the Western economics curriculum by optimizing course content, innovating teaching methods, providing teacher training and student support, and increasing extracurricular practical projects. These measures can improve students' interest and learning effectiveness, cultivate more competitive applied management talents, and provide stronger support for the development of China's economy.

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