

# *Research on the Reform of Practical Training Teaching in International Trade Practice under the New Foreign Trade Situation*

**Tao Gang**

*School of Foreign Language Studies, Wenzhou Medical University, Wenzhou, Zhejiang, China*

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**Abstract:** Currently, international trade faces a series of new situations and challenges. The course "International Trade Practices" places particular emphasis on practicality, making practical training an essential part of the curriculum. Given the new changes in the foreign trade situation, the practical training teaching of the course urgently needs to be reformed to meet the demand for new talents in international trade under the new situation. After analyzing the current status of foreign trade practical training, this article proposes specific measures to reform practical training teaching. These measures focus on cultivating students' foreign trade operation skills, aiming to better prepare them for the demands of current jobs related to foreign trade.

## **1. Introduction**

Nowadays, international trade is facing unprecedented challenges and transformations. Nonetheless, according to data from the General Administration of Customs, China's total import and export trade value continues to grow. China's demand for professionals in international trade remains strong. However, the complex foreign trade environment has placed higher demands on China's foreign trade. <sup>[1]</sup>Meanwhile, driven by the development of the internet and artificial intelligence, the rapid growth of new forms of foreign trade, such as cross-border e-commerce, has also raised new requirements for the cultivation of international trade talents. To adapt to this situation, it is particularly important to cultivate foreign trade talents with an international perspective and professional skills. International trade practices, as a core course for professional skills, has multiple characteristics such as practicality and comprehensiveness. It requires students not only to master the basic knowledge of foreign trade but also to possess practical operational skills. In recent years, the status of practical training teaching in this course has gradually increased and curriculum reform is also increasingly leaning towards practical training. However, the international business enterprises generally feeds back that newly graduated students, despite having a solid theoretical foundation, often feel overwhelmed in practical operations and find it difficult to quickly integrate into the actual operation of international trade. This reflects a significant gap between the teaching of international trade practices and the cultivation of applied talents. Therefore, facing the challenges of the new foreign trade situation, it has become a common

concern of colleges in recent years to deepen the reform of practical training teaching in international trade practices, enhancing the pertinence and effectiveness of practical training teaching, and cultivating high-quality talents who can adapt to the new foreign trade situation.

## **2. Problems in Practical Training Teaching of International Trade Practices Course**

Although the practical training teaching has achieved certain progress, there are still some areas that need improvement, mainly reflected in the following aspects:

### **2.1. The practical training teaching content is out of touch with the actual foreign trade operation, lacking timeliness and practicality.**

Indeed, there is a disconnect between current practical training teaching and actual foreign trade operation. International trade practices are a dynamically changing field, but the content of practical training teaching often updates slowly and cannot timely reflect the latest developments and actual needs of the industry. As a result, the students' learning knowledge and skills in practical training teaching may no longer meet the requirements of real work. In addition, the timeliness of practical training teaching content is also a non-negligible issue. International trade rules, policies, and market environments are constantly changing, which requires that practical training teaching content must keep up with the times and be updated in a timely manner.<sup>[2]</sup> However, many current practical textbooks and courses are outdated. Some practical courses use relatively old cases that do not reflect the latest dynamics and changes in international trade and the update speed of textbook content often cannot keep up with these changes. Consequently, the students' learning knowledge may be unable to meet the needs of current foreign trade. In addition, new trade modes have not been reflected timely in the textbooks. For example, cross-border e-commerce has developed rapidly in recent years. However, the current practical operation teaching content of cross-border e-commerce trade is relatively outdated.

### **2.2. The lack of practical experience among teachers affects the quality of practical training teaching.**

As a practical course, the teaching effectiveness of international trade practices is deeply influenced by teachers' practical experience. This course requires teachers to be proficient in both theoretical knowledge and practical experience, which are known as "dual-qualified" teachers. However, because the selection criteria for teachers in colleges have gradually increased, a large number of highly educated talents, albeit lacking in practical experience, have been introduced into the field of education. These newly introduced teachers often have profound theoretical knowledge and are research-oriented, but many of them lack practical experience in foreign trade operations. Since they have not personally participated in foreign trade business during their teaching career, it is difficult for them to keep abreast of the latest developments in international trade rules, policies, and new trends in foreign trade.<sup>[3]</sup> In practical training teaching, these teachers tend to rely too much on textbooks, resulting in a serious disconnect between practical training teaching and actual business practices. Therefore, the original goal of cultivating students' practical abilities fails to be achieved. Although colleges can hire experts with rich practical experience from enterprises to participate in teaching, these experts often lack systematic theoretical knowledge. Therefore, the lack of practical experience among teachers affects the effectiveness and quality of practical training teaching.

### **2.3. Defects in the design of international trade practical simulation software affect teaching effectiveness.**

Although many colleges have established international trade simulation training labs equipped with virtual simulation training software for students to simulate practical operations. However, there are still many defects in the design of these practical simulation software, which affect students' operational effectiveness. Specifically, the practical content of many practical simulation platforms is not authentic enough and the provided practical content is often too simplistic and tends to be static and mechanized. Taking the widely used SimTrade internship platform as an example, its weakness includes: the data update of the platform is not timely; the platform lacks special training for important aspects of foreign trade such as business negotiation and market research; its process and document design have defects, such as incorrect system document templates, overly rigid document review, etc..<sup>[3]</sup>

### **2.4. The internship training bases are imperfect and practical training Teaching lacks effective support from enterprises.**

Off-campus internship training bases are crucial for the practical training teaching of international trade practices. Only by practicing in a real and changing trade environment can students comprehensively cultivate their professional abilities and qualities, thereby enhancing their practical operation and adaptability. However, the reality is that the cooperation between colleges and enterprises is not smooth, and enterprises are not enthusiastic about undertaking student training. This is mainly because undertaking practical training requires considerable human, material, and financial resources, which undoubtedly increases the operating costs of enterprises. Especially in school-enterprise cooperation, most enterprises are private small-sized enterprises. Due to their small scale and limited number of employees, it is difficult for them to provide dedicated practical guidance personnel for students.<sup>[2]</sup> Worse still, some school-enterprise cooperation projects are merely formalities, such as only stamping students' practical reports without truly providing practical opportunities. Therefore, improving students' practical foreign trade operation abilities through internship bases has not achieved the desired effect.

## **3. Measures for Reforming Practical Training Teaching Mode for International Trade Practice Course**

Given the current status of practical training teaching in international trade practice, effective measures are needed to improve the quality of practical training teaching. Based on the new requirements of practical training teaching arising from the new developments in foreign trade, this article proposes new measures for reforming practical training teaching, aiming to construct a new model of practical training teaching in international trade.

### **3.1. Adopting Online and Offline Hybrid Practical training teaching Mode**

Adopting online and offline hybrid teaching methods, utilizing network resources such as MOOCs and micro-lectures to enrich teaching methods and improve the effectiveness of practical training teaching. Teachers should formulate course objectives based on the needs of foreign trade talent cultivation in the new situation, select course content around these objectives, continuously enrich and optimize online teaching resources in course design, and release tasks, videos, PPT files, case studies, and other materials on the online teaching platform for pre-class guidance, so that students can conduct independent pre-class learning offline. Offline teaching is recommended to

adopt a problem-based learning (PBL) approach, designing problem-centered learning tasks to enhance students' practical abilities in the process of problem-solving. After class, teachers assign testing tasks on the online practical training platform to further consolidate what they have learned in class and improve foreign trade skills. Before operating, students should watch the operation micro-videos and animation demonstrations uploaded by the teacher. After submission, the teacher provides guidance and evaluation through an online communication platform.<sup>[4]</sup> The online and offline hybrid teaching mode maximizes the effectiveness of teaching resources, promotes the integration of theory and practice, and ultimately achieves the teaching goal of improving students' comprehensive quality and practical skills.

### **3.2. Actively Developing Practical Training Content and Textbooks, and Improving Practical Training Guidance**

In the process of practical training teaching, the compilation of practical training guidance textbooks is a key link to ensure teaching quality. To keep the teaching content closely integrated with actual foreign trade operations, teachers must regularly update textbooks and case studies, incorporating the latest international trade rules, policies, and practical cases in a timely manner. When selecting textbooks for practical training teaching, colleges can learn from those textbooks that are closely connected with actual foreign trade business. Besides, colleges can jointly develop suitable practical training textbooks through school-enterprise cooperation. These textbooks should be written based on the specific duties and professional ability requirements of foreign trade business positions, combined with real cases of foreign trade enterprises.<sup>[5]</sup> Especially in cross-border e-commerce business practical training teaching, colleges need more in-depth participation and assistance from enterprises, so that students can keep up with the rapid development of cross-border e-commerce business. In addition, teachers should make full use of professional foreign trade websites, forums, databases, and other resources to obtain the latest international trade information and data, and integrate these contents into teaching.<sup>[5]</sup>

### **3.3. Strengthening the Training of Teachers' Practical training teaching Ability and Creating a "Dual-Qualified" Teaching Team**

To effectively improve students' practical operation skills, it is imperative to have teachers with "dual-qualified" abilities and qualities to undertake practical training teaching tasks. These teachers should not only be proficient in teaching techniques but also have a profound understanding of the practical operations and norms of the foreign trade. To strengthen the construction of the "dual-qualified" team, colleges should adopt a strategy that combines "external introduction" and "internal cultivation". Specifically, colleges should encourage teachers to go deep into foreign trade enterprises for field practice, participating in vocational skills training and short-term foreign trade internships. In this way, colleges can cultivate a group of "dual-qualified" teachers who not only grasp the theory of international trade but also possess practical operation skills. Meanwhile, the college should actively introduce experienced foreign trade experts with solid theoretical foundations from foreign trade enterprises to join the teaching team. These experts can provide students with valuable operation experience and practical guidance.<sup>[5]</sup> For example, experienced cross-border e-commerce operation experts can be invited to guide students in simulated practical operations. A "dual-qualified" team will significantly improve the practical training teaching level of the international trade practice course, laying a solid foundation for students' future career development.

### **3.4. Increasing Investment in Practical Training Labs, and Building a "Simulation + Reality" Practical training teaching Platform**

To effectively improve students' practical operation skills, colleges should continuously improve the functions of on-campus training labs, creating a more realistic simulated operation environment for students. Colleges need to further increase investment in the construction of training labs, enabling more students to conduct practical training exercises simultaneously. This will help significantly improve students' practical operation skills. Additionally, colleges should carefully analyze the currently used international trade simulation software, identify shortcomings, and actively communicate with software technicians from the software company to improve it.<sup>[2]</sup>As for the cross-border e-commerce training platform, colleges should continuously update the operation content and mode according to the latest development trends of cross-border e-commerce through school-enterprise cooperation.

### **3.5. Promoting Learning Through Competition and Using Certificates as Substitutes for Exams**

To more effectively achieve the professional training objectives, schools can consider adopting a "course-competition-certificate" trifecta teaching model.<sup>[2]</sup> Specifically, schools can regularly organize and participate in skill competitions related to international trade. Such competitions not only provide a stage for students to showcase their skills but also promote more active engagement in practical operations through a competitive mechanism. Additionally, vocational skill competitions can serve as an important way to assess the quality of our practical training teaching. Through feedback from the competitions, schools can timely identify problems in students' skill operations and deficiencies in teachers' practical training teaching, allowing them to adjust teaching methods and content accordingly.<sup>[6]</sup> Meanwhile, "certificate" refers to vocational qualification certificates, which are essential for certain jobs. Our professional teachers should provide students with targeted career planning guidance, and recommend them to actively apply for vocational qualification certificates. Schools can also implement a system where obtaining corresponding certificates can be exchanged for certain credits, which will help drive innovation in our talent training model.

### **3.6. Expanding School-Enterprise Cooperation and Fostering Good School-Enterprise Relationships**

The school-enterprise cooperation model not only provides a valuable platform for combining theory with practice but also meets enterprises' demand for foreign trade talents. To achieve seamless integration between talent training and industry needs, the construction of off-campus training internship bases is crucial. However, genuine school-enterprise cooperation goes beyond signing a cooperation agreement and requires deep integration and long-lasting maintenance. To solidify this foundation, schools must increase funding and continuously expand and carefully maintain off-campus internship bases. Schools should establish a two-way interactive practical training teaching system that combines "sending out" and "bringing in" modes. "Sending out" refers to regularly dispatching students to foreign trade-related enterprises for internships, allowing them to experience the actual operation of international trade. Similarly, it is essential for college teachers to step out of the campus and go deep into the enterprises. Through joint teacher training, experience exchanges, and scientific research cooperation organized by schools and enterprises, teachers can fully utilize enterprise resources to enhance their teaching and practical abilities. The "bringing in" strategy involves inviting foreign trade experts, outstanding enterprise employees to

campus. Through lectures or practical guidance, they can provide students with the most cutting-edge theoretical and practical knowledge of international trade practices.<sup>[5]</sup> With this school-enterprise cooperation model, schools can cultivate more high-quality talents that meet industry needs and provide more talents for enterprises, truly achieving deep integration of education and industry.

#### 4. Conclusion

Given the current situation, schools must conduct in-depth research and exploration on practical training in international trade practices to innovate our teaching methods. Schools need to continuously adjust and optimize the content and methods of practical training courses to improve teaching effectiveness. Through such reforms, schools can cultivate more qualified and competitive foreign trade talents that meet market demand under the new foreign trade situation..

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