Way Out and Strategies for Fostering High-level Application-Oriented Talents with Global Visions

– With GDUFS as an Illustration

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I. Social background for application-oriented talent cultivation

With the all-round socio-economic development and in the light of the nature of the roles that people play in the course of production, talents can be divided into theory-oriented ones (or academic talents) and application-oriented ones. Generally speaking, theory-oriented talents have greater research interest in theoretical, and scientific and technological innovations. They mainly sustain such great responsibilities as discovering the laws of nature and innovating knowledge in the socio-economic development. They are required to have a solid foundation in theory with advanced creative thinking and great competence in conducting research.

*Theoretical basis, creative thinking and research competence are the basic qualities of ultimate importance to theory-oriented.*
To foster large numbers of application-oriented talents constitutes the main task for institutions of higher education in China. This has much to do with the social background in which China is undergoing the industrialization era. Presently, China, as a world manufacturing center, has witnessed rapid socio-economic development, which urgently requires that institutions of higher education foster multi-tiered application-oriented talents who can be easily adaptable to their work in terms of quality, competence and knowledge. China’s education, however, still faces a structural shortage of the training of such kind of talents. As a result, what is of vital importance for institutions of higher education is to explore and innovate the education system of application-oriented talents and to establish the mechanisms for educating undergraduate application-oriented talents by utilizing all social resources so as to meet the requirements of the current job market and to face challenges arising from international competition.
Overseas experience

Germany:
*The Higher Education Law of West Germany of the 1970s* stipulated application-oriented universities are protected by higher education law. Later, the applied science universities, with the mission of mission is to foster application-oriented talents instead of theory-oriented talents, began to be established.

U.S.A:
82% of the current US postgraduate degrees belong to professional applied degrees in various disciplines.
II. Dilemmas in Application-oriented Talent Education in China

1. Perplexities on the part of the government

These perplexities derive from an inadequacy of thorough academic research, an inadequacy of theoretical support and a vague understanding of certain key concepts. Because of this, they have not had a basic idea of what is meant by “application-oriented talents”. Everyone talks about them but no one can really express themselves clearly. Consequently, it is difficult for the government to make relevant policies and to establish a security mechanism for application-oriented talents through mobilizing whatever resources.
2. Doubts on the part of the general public

Quite a large number of universities have proposed to foster first-line application-oriented talents, but this proposal has been called into question by many parents – especially by those of some undergraduate college or university students who consider that the quality of education in today’s universities has been on the downgrade. Enterprises or employers also find that graduates do not have much application ability and that they seldom put theory into practice or are simply unable to practice, especially when they received education in universities which lack an adequate investigation or understanding of the current socio-economic situation and of the industry demands or needs, and which no efforts to enhance practice teaching. As a result, the general public throws doubt about the education of application-oriented talents.
3. Dilemmas on the part of universities

Universities may choose “fostering application-oriented talents” according to their orientation and development objectives, but they worry whether their choice of “fostering application-oriented talents” would mean downgrading themselves. Of this some undergraduate colleges or universities are not confident enough, for their orientation of development objectives does not match their choice of development path. Therefore, with great hesitation, they are finding their way in dilemmas.
Professional Opinion on Solution

Professor Huang Daren, former president of Sun Yat-sen University, pointed out, “When we talk about “application-oriented talents” education, we should not restrict ourselves only to the discussion of what is meant by “application-oriented”. Instead, we should get to the core of this concept. Most importantly, by “application-orientedness”, we mean that our graduates will to a greater extent conform to the needs of the society. Being application-oriented does not mean a lower level. Neither job market orientedness nor the emphasis on application-oriented research be regarded so. The educating level of a university is not so much represented by its educating orientation as by the level of the services which are rendered to its educating orientation.
Example – Translation Studies

Translation is a typically high-level, application-oriented and professional major. Many countries in the world attach great importance to the development of this major. Some universities in these countries have even established doctoral degrees in Translation, and there is a growing tendency for this. Ever since it was approved by the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council in 1991 to establish Master of Business Administration (MBA) in China in 1991, altogether 39 professional master degrees and 5 professional doctoral degrees have been established successively. Thanks to the establishment of these degrees, large batches of high-level application-oriented talents have been fostered to serve our nation in various fields. The newly established major – Translation, which has long been playing an important role in the economic construction of China, however, has not gained approval for the establishment of a professional doctoral degree so far.
Example - Translation Studies in GDUFS

Ever since the year 2007 when Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (GDUFS) and other institutions of higher education first proposed and established the degree for Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) in 2007, altogether 159 universities in China have begun to offer MTI programs to students. However, according to a recent survey, the number of MTI graduates is far from enough to meet the needs of the current translation market and of the whole language service industry for top-grade translation talents. The present Ph. D. education in Translation Studies in China is in fact a theory-oriented degree education. Its educational mode is not in compliance with the competence requirements as well as the knowledge requirements of the professional application-oriented talents in the field of translation. Thus we deem it necessary and eligible to establish the professional doctoral degree – Doctor of Translation and Interpreting (DTI). The establishment of DTI can, on one hand, help resolve such problems as the industrialization of language service industry and the shortage of top-grade talents, and on the other hand, enlarge the pool of teachers for MTI education.
Therefore...

To promote nationwide the establishment of the education system of high-level application-oriented talents by constructing an advanced framework system with international standard and Chinese characteristics for fostering application-oriented talents in every field of the industrial sector is a choice of strategic importance which will enable the current higher education to adapt itself to the requirements of the socio-economic development.

If colleges or universities directly under the ministries of China constitute the main force which aims to foster theory-oriented talents, then, local colleges or universities all over China should be the main force which aims to foster professional application-oriented talents. These local colleges or universities should tailor their education to the needs of “the localities” and commit themselves to fostering highly qualified and high-level application-oriented talents with great professional skills and great competence in coping with practical issues. Only in this way can we gain support through rendering services and seek development through making contributions.
Ⅲ. Ways to Foster High-level Application-oriented Talents with Global Visions

Economic globalization, a trigger of the internationalization of higher education, has promoted competition and cooperation between institutions of higher education in different countries. The internationalization of higher education has motivated colleges or universities to innovate their teaching and management concepts. Cooperation between foreign educational institutions and Chinese educational institutions is the most convenient and effective way to integrate international education resources. Different countries and regions can, by making full use of their own advantage resources (education funds, faculty force, and student sources, etc), conduct international and inter-regional cooperation in the field of education so as to introduce from each other the quality educational resources according to their needs.[6] But the international and inter-regional cooperation in the field of education still encounters barriers manifested by differences in systems, in mechanisms and in cultures. How can we overcome these barriers? In recent years, GDUFS has made very helpful explorations by resorting to the collaborative innovation center and the collaborative education platform. We have done the following things:
1. Enhancing a Scientific Outlook on Quality and the New Concept of Internationalized Education and Innovating the Education Mode of Talents with Global Visions

To attribute distinctive international connotations to the talent education objectives requires us to break away from the relatively closed traditional education mode of talents and to enhance exchange and cooperation at a deeper level with those high-level institutions of higher education overseas or in other countries. By borrowing ideas from internationally advanced education philosophies, curriculums, management experiences and education modes, we integrate the international, intercultural and global concepts into the teaching, research, service and cultural transmission of the university so as to realize the glocalization of talent education and to further enhance the level and the standard of internationalized education.
1). Endeavors will be made to deepen the collaborative innovation of quality teaching resources on campus from both the foreign language sector and the non-foreign language sector, and to improve the construction of the present series of “innovation classes” for international business talent education. In such classes for example, explorations will be made to adopt the absolute credit system which is in compliance with the reality in China, to allow students of “innovation classes” to take optional trans-disciplinary courses and to encourage and support the construction of “mobile classes”, to implement a more flexible credit transfer system and to get 50% of our students to study abroad or overseas.
2). Endeavors will be made to strengthen collaborative innovation with large-sized internationalized enterprises and to launch HSBC Software Innovation Class and China Southern Airlines Class characterized by the intensification of field practice. Through such an open and cooperative education mode, we aim to establish an open-ended joint training mechanism for transnational enterprises and the society so as to foster top-level internationalized application-oriented talents.
3). Endeavors will be made to enhance collaborative innovation with excellent universities abroad and to launch Liang Zongdai English Class, ESC Rennes International Economy and Trade Class and International Business Administration Class characterized by straight entrance from bachelors to masters overseas. Through multi-tiered and wide-ranging educational exchange and cooperation, we aim to enhance all forms of cooperation in running schools with universities in other countries and to promote the construction of such substantive projects as student exchange, curriculum swap, and mutual recognition of credits so as to level up the internationalization of the undergraduate education.
2. Promoting Internationalization of Talent Education with Practical Measures

1). Establishing internationalized curriculums

We encourage colleges to borrow ideas from the curriculum designs and the teaching contents of internationally well-known universities abroad, to step up efforts to introduce their specialty curriculums or curriculum groups, and to introduce advanced textbooks from abroad so as to constantly deepen the reform of teaching contents and to build up a specialty curriculum system in line with international standards. As conditions permit, certain courses are encouraged to make full use of the current advanced network teaching platforms and to establish collaborative teaching teams by adopting a cooperative teaching mode so as to share international courses and resources.

We will strive for the construction of 250 English Immersed Courses or Bilingual Courses by the year 2015 so as to lay a solid foundation for the goal of constructing 400 English Immersed Courses or Bilingual Courses by the year 2020 and 800 English Immersed Courses or Bilingual Courses by the year 2025.
2). Nurturing internationalized teaching teams
The key to the improvement of teaching quality lies in the teaching staff. GDUFS will continue to build a teaching staff with global visions through a training system featured by professionalism, diversification and the involvement of the whole staff.

Efforts are also made to improve the assessment and the incentive mechanisms for teachers.
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3). Adopting internationalized teaching mode and teaching methodology
The reform and innovation of teaching methodologies and of teaching modes is a breakthrough to the improvement of teaching quality. The University will initiate specifically-designated reform projects or teaching reform projects in order to steer teachers towards the reform of teaching methodologies and of teaching modes.
4). Establishing an internationalized practice teaching system

Firstly, efforts should be made to establish more high-quality internationalized practice teaching bases. Cooperation with internationally well-known enterprises and other foreign affairs units should be enhanced so as to establish more high-level practice teaching bases. Continuous efforts will be exerted to expand overseas practice bases for undergraduate students and greater support will be given to the existing overseas practice bases. Full use will be made of the on-campus lab resources, student’s practice venues in order to establish on-campus practice bases. Secondly, further measures will be taken to increase credits in practice teaching and to enhance students’ innovation education and entrepreneurship education. For instance, we will popularize on campus the course Basics for College Students’ Entrepreneurship, and further improve such inter-college and inter-discipline practice teaching courses as Enterprise Behavior Simulation (for on-campus practice), and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). Through the improvement of the credit identification system, we will encourage students’ innovative learning.
5). **Improving the internationalized teaching management system**

Efforts will be made to experiment on the absolute credit system mode. In reliance on the project of Guangdong Province “Trials on Comprehensive Reform of Autonomy in Running a University”, the University will select some of its schools or faculties for experiment on an early and pilot basis with breakthroughs in key areas. Through reforms of the school admission policy, of the curriculum design, of the course selection mode, of the teaching staff administration, and of the tuition fee standards, we make explorations on the absolute credit management mode which is in line with international standards.
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Conclusion

As a provincial key university distinctively characterized by internationalization, GDUFS, by adhering to the education philosophy of “holistic education and pursuit of excellence”, pursues connotative or intensive development, and by quickening the steps in reform and innovation, enhances the strategy of the internationalization of education with the aim to internationalize our teachers, our students, our academic research and our administration and to turn our university into a high-level university with distinctive features, with excellent quality, with social respect and with satisfaction from our Party, our nation and our people.
THANK YOU!