

The Teaching Contents and Methods of International Pharmaceutical Business

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This paper is a summary concerning teaching reforms on teaching content, methods and media of International Pharmaceutical Business, a core course offered in the Business School, China Pharmaceutical University. On the basis of the principle that international business theories must be integrated with Chinese foreign trade practical conditions as well as the characteristics of Chinese pharmaceutical industry, we have launched a series of reforms in the teaching process of international pharmaceutical business. Through such measures as simulations, case study, seminar, audiovisuals and real products, desirable teaching effects have been realized.

The course of International Pharmaceutical Business at China Pharmaceutical University is offered for undergraduate students majoring in international business. It is quite different from similar courses of international business offered at other universities. International pharmaceutical business not only has to combine fundamental theories on international business with the overall situation of Chinese foreign trade and the various companies' foreign-related business activities, but more importantly, it must embody the characteristics of Chinese pharmaceutical foreign trade. Only in this way can we meet the urgent needs for pharmaceutical foreign trade professionals with the ever-increasing globalization trend in the Chinese pharmaceutical sector and nurture the development of qualified graduates who are knowledgeable foreign trade professionals. To this end, based upon my experience of teaching international business for years and the characteristics of Chinese pharmaceutical foreign trade development, I have been undertaking a series of enterprising reforms of the contents, teaching methods as well as teaching media, in the International Pharmaceutical Business course.

TEACHING CONTENTS

Two principles are followed in conducting reform in the teaching content of International Pharmaceutical Business.

1. Combining International Business Theories with Chinese Foreign Trade Development Conditions

Both international pharmaceutical business and international business have the same theoretical foundation. Apart from the fundamentals of Marxism, the theoretical foundation is mainly based upon Western economic theories. Looking back on the history of international trade, China began conducting international trade much later than some developed Western countries who have centuries of experience in this regard. China lags far behind in strength and experience of foreign trade. On one hand, if we start to accumulate international trade experiences step by step on our own, it will definitely take much more time and energy, incurring unnecessary losses to our economy.

Am. J. Pharm. Educ., 65, 293-294(2001); received 6/1/01.

Further, if, the Western economic theories are copied without discrimination, we will inevitably divorce ourselves from our own actual situations and leave us in no position to effectively direct our national economy. Under such circumstances, the wise choice for China is to follow the way of introduction, digestion, absorption and innovation. Therefore, when introducing each Western economic theory in the International Pharmaceutical Business course, emphasis is always placed on the analysis of its guiding significance on Chinese foreign trade development through some specific real examples. In cases where Western theory does not fit a Chinese actual situation, I often help my students realize the particularity of Chinese foreign trade development by illustration.

2. Embodying the Characteristics of Pharmaceutical Industry

Compared with Western counterparts, Chinese pharmaceutical industry lags far behind in technology, management and internationalization. The internationalization level of pharmaceutical industry, one of the fifteen well-accepted global industries, is a yardstick measuring a country's pharmaceutical industry development level. Therefore, it is imperative for Chinese pharmaceutical industry to become internationalized. In the process of internationalization, we face many problems that deserve our in-depth study. To internationalize, for example, we must strictly observe related international treaties and practices in all business activities. What are those international treaties and practices? At present, 97 percent of the products manufactured by Chinese pharmaceutical industry are mere imitations of existing foreign products. If China becomes a WTO member, it must abide by WTO's agreement on trade-related aspects on the rights of intellectual property. This will undoubtedly exert a great impact on the Chinese pharmaceutical industry. What should be covered by the aforementioned agreement? What impact will it bring about to Chinese pharmaceutical industry? What measures should Chinese pharmaceutical enterprises take to make full use of the preferential treatment offered by WTO? Such questions are in dire need to be answered by the Chinese pharmaceutical industry. Therefore, they should become the key teaching and research contents of the International Pharmaceutical Business course.

TEACHING METHODS

In an effort to achieve good results in lecturing on international pharmaceutical business, the following effective teaching methods have been implemented.

Simulation

The International Pharmaceutical Business course not only involves a complete theoretical system, but also relates to many complex practical processes. When conducting import and export business, foreign trade enterprises must fulfill various formalities. When lecturing on the contents, I usually explain the process in detail to students through charts prepared in advance and then encourage them to simulate the entire process.

For example, processing trade is the most popular trade mode in China, accounting for 56 percent of the total current trade volume. It is quite necessary to make students majoring in international business become acquainted with the entire formalities of processing trade because they are very likely to conduct this kind of transaction after graduation. In order to help students get a clear picture of this trade mode, every

aspect of transaction is explained to them with the aid of charts showing in detail all necessary formalities and requirements. After this, students are encouraged to play various roles involved in the trade to simulate the whole trade process.

Case Study

In an attempt to deepen the students' understanding of Chinese pharmaceutical industrial and commercial enterprises, a number of case studies were conducted in the course. Several representative enterprises in Chinese pharmaceutical and health care sector were selected requiring students to analyze them one by one with an eye to making them realize the difficulties facing Chinese pharmaceutical enterprises aimed to develop globally.

Seminar

In order to perfect the knowledge acquired in class and nurture the students' comprehensive abilities such as consultation, writing and oral presentation, they were required to write academic essays. Excellent essays are singled out for exchange at seminars presided by the students themselves. Usually, a specific period of time is reserved for free debating of each one.

TEACHING MEDIA

Besides proper teaching contents and teaching methods, scientific and advanced teaching media are necessary to attain good teaching results the following teaching media were employed to facilitate my teaching

Projector

Projector-aided teaching can save time, enrich teaching information and increase the accuracy of the knowledge delivered. However, it requires more preparatory work for lecturers. In order to make full use of projector and to promote teaching quality, all related teaching contents were classified into such different parts as logic framework, fundamental category, theory introduction, practical application and typical case study. Each part is then filmed separately. According to each part's characteristics, the most suitable teaching measures were adopted in the projector-aided teaching process. This method was a great success.

Real Products

Students usually have no working experience and therefore may lack firsthand information on pharmaceutical products. To overcome this disadvantage, real products were brought into the classroom to aid the teaching of the International Pharmaceutical Business course. By comparing specific real products one by one, students can personally perceive the differences between varied enterprises in terms of market share and economic profit as a consequence of the different management ideals and styles they adopt. Furthermore, it helps to develop the students' sense of responsibility in internationalizing Chinese national pharmaceutical industry.

SUMMARY

Through the aforesaid innovative measures adopted in teaching a course in international pharmaceutical business, desirable results have been achieved and won popularity among students. At the same time some contributions have been made to the cultivation of composite professionals for Chinese pharmaceutical industry.