

# Diversified teaching methods: A practical research from the students' perspectives

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**Abstract:** *It has become an urgent demand for talent in terms of the national innovation and industrial development in China. Minister of Education pointed out that we should adhere to the orientations of the fundamental education, which would promote the revitalization of undergraduate studies. In this article, through online survey and offline interviews, it is getting information and collecting data according to the students' learning experiences via the course of Strategic Management. It has evaluated the practices of diversified teaching methods via Strategic Management, analyzed the effects of different methods from the students attitudes, and put forward corresponding suggestions for improvement. This research has demonstrated for courses like Strategic Management, utilizing diversified teaching methods could provide practical experiences and ideas for students, which make the course become more suitable for the new requirements in colleges and universities.*

**Keywords:** *Diversified teaching methods; teaching reform; students' perspectives*

## 1. Introduction

A new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation has occurred in China to face more competitions around the world, which is forming a historic intersection with the accelerated transformation of China's economic development pattern. National innovation, development and industrial upgrading have an unprecedented urgent need for talents, and put forward new and higher requirements for the reform and innovation of higher education.

Qualified talent training has become an important and consensus trend in higher education in the world. To promote the classroom teaching revolution, the focus should be on not only what should be taught and how to teach in universities, but also students' learning experiences, i.e. how to learn and how well to learn, and then indicate how to build student-oriented education [9].

The diversified teaching method originated from the foreign stratified teaching theory at the earliest, whose essence is the interaction between personality and commonness. For example, Prof. Bloom, the famous American educationalist, and Prof. Zankov, the former Soviet Union educationalist, have done relevant researches in this field. In Chinese domestic education arena, many researchers have also demonstrated and analyzed the diversified teaching methods. Diversity education is an education that respects differences. It's inheriting the positivesides of tradition education, but attempts to be more innovative [1]. The curriculum design under the diversified teaching mode should adopt a variety of presentation methods to meet the different needs of learners and better tap the potential of learners [2]. At present, the Chinese Ministry of Education promotes the revitalization of undergraduate education and puts forward the concept of "classroom teaching revolution", which is more important and urgent for the management courses with more practices. However, according to the current research results, the majority of the researches on diversified teaching methods are still limited to textual statements, except that some scholars have fully cited specific data. At the same time, more researches focus on the innovation of teaching methods and means. As for the students' experiences and the evaluation of the effects of diversified teaching, the relevant research results are still limited. Based on the background discussion and the comprehensive, systematic and practical characteristics of Strategic Management course, this paper discusses the effects to implement the diversified teaching methods in Strategic Management according to the diversified teaching theories and the students' learning experiences. Through questionnaire survey, it's analyzed attitudes of the students in term of the curriculum design and teaching methods. It's based on the students' learning experiences to provide more suggestions for Strategic Management which will benefit more management courses regarding strategic thinking and innovations of teaching methods [10].

## 2. The Application of Diversified Teaching Methods

Based on the disadvantages of traditional teaching methods, and the students in-class experiences and expectations, the new trend of the teaching methods via Strategic Management course presents to be more diversified and innovative in our school. There four major trends: modularization of teaching tactics, modelling of teaching contents, typical design of evaluation methods, and supporting in learning activities.

### 2.1. Modularization of Teaching Tactics

According to the course content, the course of strategic management is divided into four modules: theoretical review, strategic analysis, strategic selection and implementation, and strategic control and evaluation (see table 1 in the attached page for the specific division). This method makes the classification of knowledge points more systematic and easy to sort out problems and review. At the same time, through modular teaching design, teachers can be flexible in teaching form and arrangement. For example, experts or enterprise personage are invited to make special topic explanation for the corresponding modules, which not only makes theoretical knowledge clear, but also combines with practice, enriching information.

Table 1: The Content of Strategic Management Based on Different Module

Module	Key Issues	Teaching Tasks
Literature Review	The theoretical background of strategy and strategic management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The concepts and definitions</li> <li>■ The process to make strategies</li> <li>■ The importance of strategies</li> </ul>
Strategic Analysis	External environment analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PEST analysis</li> <li>■ Industry competitive analysis</li> <li>■ Competitors analysis</li> <li>■ Customer analysis</li> <li>■ Evaluation of external environment</li> </ul>
	Internal environment analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Resources, capabilities and competitive advantages</li> <li>■ Value chain analysis</li> <li>■ Core-competency analysis</li> <li>■ Evaluation of internal environment</li> </ul>
	Strategic mission and goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mission, vision and philosophies of a company</li> <li>■ Strategic objectives</li> <li>■ Strategic ethics</li> </ul>
Strategic Action	Corporate level strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Different corporate strategies for different conditions</li> <li>■ The selection methods of corporate strategies</li> </ul>
	SBU strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Competitive strategies</li> <li>■ BCG Matrix and other tools for competitive strategy selections</li> </ul>
Strategic Outcomes	Strategic control and evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Organization structure and strategies</li> <li>■ Leadership and strategies</li> <li>■ Strategic controlling tools</li> </ul>

### 2.2. Modelling of Teaching Contents

In the main knowledge points, the extensive use of models, reduce the amount of text interpretation, so that knowledge points more convenient to learn. For example, in the analysis of external environment, PEST analysis model and Five Forces analysis model are applied; In the internal environment analysis, the value chain and SWOT analysis models are adopted. In corporate level strategy, use Ansoff matrix; In the competitive strategy, Porter's generic competitive strategy model is used. In the analysis of strategy selections, the Great Strategy matrix, BCG matrix and General Electric Rules are applied. In strategic control, the use of balanced scorecard is applied. In the interpretation of the models, pay attention to the evaluation index of the models and the model contents, and use the real enterprises as examples to illustrate these models [3]. Meanwhile, analyze the current problems with the application of models and theories. It is important to encourage the students to think and discuss, which can enhance the learning

process becoming more interesting, and improve the students' ability at the same time [7].

### 2.3. Typical Design of Evaluation Methods

At present, in the course of strategic management, the traditional result-oriented evaluation mode has been changed to a "process + result" evaluation mode combining theory with practice. Use an open teaching method that tracks a company over a semester to review students' learning throughout the semester. First, students form a team to determine the target enterprises they are interested in. Secondly, students should be guided to collect, acquire and refine the relevant information of target enterprises, and complete the analysis of each module. Third, make group reports and present the research results of each stage in class. Fourth, at the end of the term, I formed a strategic plan to make Suggestions for the enterprises I studied. The final grade is composed of the results reported by the group in class, the homework for each module at ordinary times, the enterprise planning book at the end of the term and the performance at ordinary times, which fully exercises the students' ability of expression, teamwork and practice [5].

### 2.4. Supporting in learning activities

In terms of learning support, a multi-channel approach combining classroom support, online support and after-class support is adopted. Classroom support is mainly embodied in the teacher leading the analysis of theoretical knowledge, case analysis, classroom discussion and comments on assignments. Online support mainly includes real-time information sharing and discussion, building groups to share teaching materials and using chat software for micro-class teaching and Q&A; In terms of after-class support, teachers mainly use spare time to answer questions and share meeting and training information with students in a timely manner. These ways and methods of learning support break through the limitation of time and place and make the communication and information transmission between teachers and students more efficient and convenient.

## 3. Research design toward the effectiveness

In order to understand the student learning experience of diversified teaching effectively, the research team from the perspective of students designed a "strategic management" course satisfaction questionnaire, the questionnaire is mainly from the students' mastery of theoretical knowledge, the ability of ascension to the specific teaching methods and students' evaluation of three aspects to investigate [6]. The questionnaire is distributed in three periods: the beginning, the middle and the end for each semester. The research objects are senior students who have studied this course. All the questionnaires are distributed online by teachers during the teaching process, which can improve the reliability and efficiency of the answer. The survey was conducted in three semesters from March 2018 to April 2019. The proportion of students who participated in the exam was 72% at the beginning of the semester, which was related to the fact that some students did not return to school due to internship at the beginning of the semester. The mid-term participation rate is 100%; The participation rate at the end of the term was 70%, mainly because the students were busy with revision and failed to fill in the questionnaire in time at the end of the term. The effective rate of the submitted questionnaire is 100% after the audit.

In the interview method, the students who have studied the course of strategic management are selected as the research objects, and the students can communicate with them through face-to-face interview, telephone consultation or online communication, so as to continuously feedback the teaching effect information [8]. The students who communicate with each other are divided into two parts: one is the fixed personnel, who can check the experience and experience changes in the course promotion in each period; The other part is a random selection to check the learning mentality and feelings of different students, truly understand their evaluation of the application of diversified teaching methods in the course of strategic management, and obtain first-hand information related to this study (refer to table 2).

Table 2: Interview Questions (part)

1. How do you think the importance regarding the diversified teaching methods in Strategy Management? Why?
2. What kinds of diversified teaching methods can be utilized in Strategy Management? Which one is your favorite?
3. How do you think about the effectiveness of the diversified teaching methods in Strategy Management? Please give examples.

**4. Research results and discussions**

On the data collected through questionnaires, interviews and other methods, materials was summarized and analyzing by using the corresponding statistical software analysis. These results have demonstrated that the diversified teaching method could be beneficial for students to grasp theoretical knowledge, and develop learning abilities. It also showed how the students evaluated in the teaching process, and discussed the students' course experiences at the end of this section.

**4.1. Multi-teaching methods can benefit learning in theories**

At the beginning, 52.24 percent of the students were looking forward to learning theoretical knowledge, while 36.82 percent were looking forward to it. During the mid-term and the final term, the majority of students were satisfied with the theoretical knowledge learned in the course of strategic management, and the proportion of students who were very satisfied at the end of the term was higher than that at the middle term (refer to figure 1). By modeling the teaching content and modularizing the teaching strategies, students can make the knowledge points clearer and easier to grasp and remember. However, a few students think that the content of the course is too abstract, involving a wide range of subjects and difficult to understand theoretical knowledge.

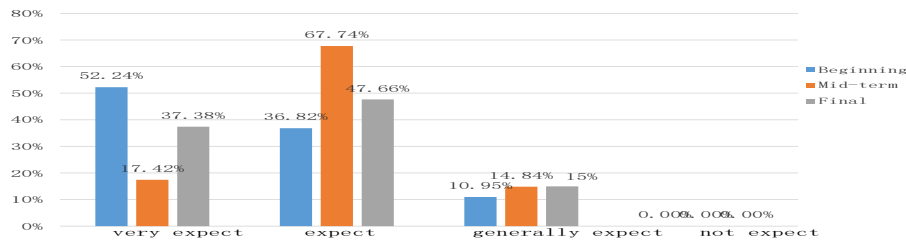


Figure 1: Students expectations and satisfactions toward theories during the semester

**4.2. Multi-teaching methods can promote students' capabilities**

In the aspect of ability cultivation, it mainly examines the ability of logical thinking, learning methods and the ability to apply the knowledge learned to practice. The data show that: most of the students expect to exercise their ability through the course of strategic management at the beginning of the term, and their satisfaction at the end of the term is higher than that at the middle term, indicating that the diversified teaching method has achieved a significant effect in cultivating students' ability. It is worth mentioning that in the mid-term, 44.52% of the students thought that they seldom applied the theoretical knowledge to practice. However, as the course progressed, the number dropped to 26.17% by the end of the semester (refer to figure 2-4).

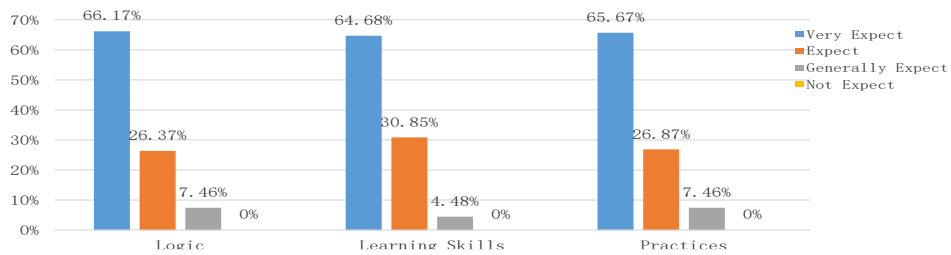


Figure 2: Students' expectations on capabilities at the beginning of the semester

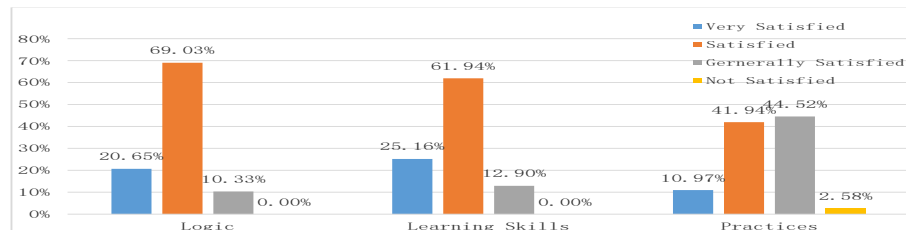


Figure 3: Students' expectations on capabilities at the mid-semester

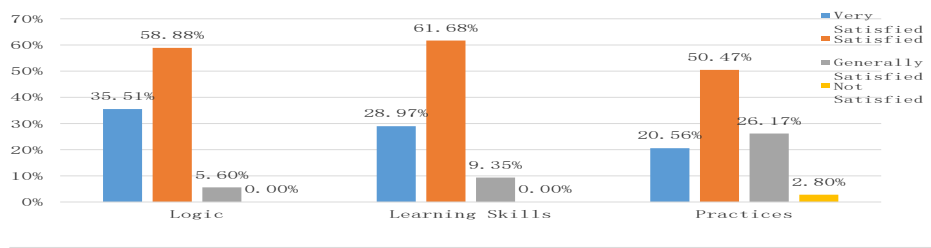


Figure 4: Students' expectations on capabilities at the beginning of the semester

4.3. Students' evaluations and expectations

(1) Utilizing online and offline methods

Students believe that online teaching improves the efficiency of information transmission, makes high-quality resources open and Shared, and breaks the limitation of time and space. As for online learning, the most popular ways are live sharing and MOOC, which account for 57.89% and 40.35% respectively (refer to figure 5). For offline teaching, students pay more attention to the teaching method of teachers, the interaction between teachers and students and students, as well as the atmosphere of class, which is also an incomparable advantage compared with online teaching (refer to figure 6).

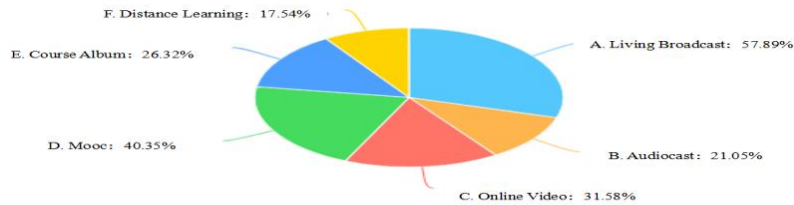


Figure 5: The attitudes toward the Online learning methods

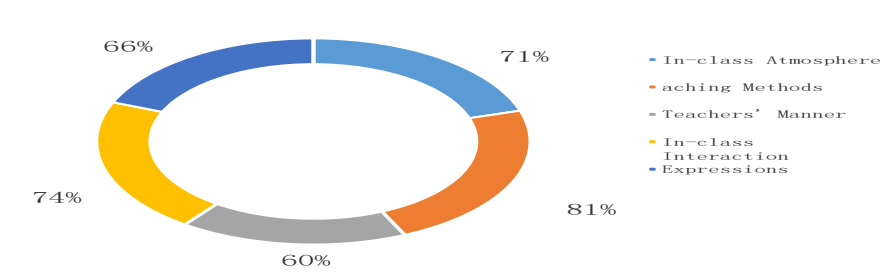


Figure 6: The attitudes towards the Offline learning methods

(2) Authorizing students

99 percent of the students believe that the method of group discussion and group report has improved their teamwork ability (refer to figure 7), greatly improved their communication ability and tolerance, and enhanced their feelings with classmates. In addition, students expressed that they could construct their own strategic thinking by studying an enterprise, and they would have great interest in and a deeper understanding of the enterprise they studied at the end of the semester.

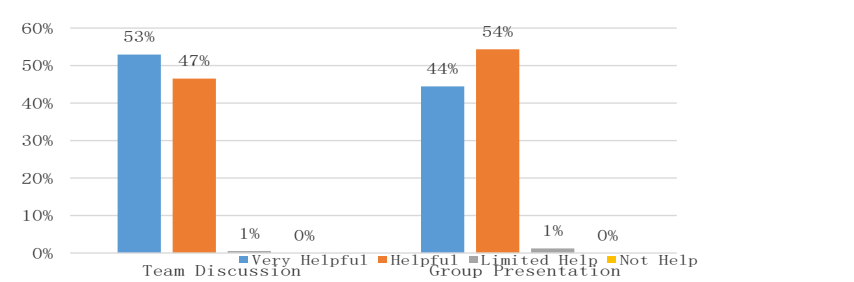


Figure 7: The attitudes toward team work and report

### (3) Designing modular contents

For modular teaching, 80.65% of students agree that this method makes knowledge points more systematic and improves the ability to summarize. In addition, in the modular design, homework at ordinary times and enterprise planning at the end of the term each account for 50% of the total score. Students can choose the modules they are mainly responsible for according to their own abilities and interests, playing the role of teaching students according to their aptitude, and making the assessment results more fair. As for the teaching method in which several teachers are responsible for different modules, students do not agree with it because different teachers have different teaching methods and need to have a long adaptation period (refer to figure 8).

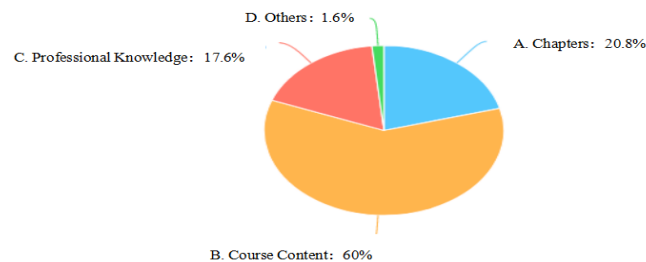


Figure 8: Students' attitudes toward the suitable modular contents

#### 4.4. Subject learning experiences

The diversified teaching methods used in the course of strategic management are conducive to students' mastery of basic theories and skills, but some students think that they have no effect. Therefore, this part will analyze and discuss the causes of students' experience from three aspects of knowledge, ability and emotion:

In the aspect of knowledge, the nature of the strategic management course and location decision management theory, it must start with other functions such as financial management, marketing management as the foundation, this requests the student to the knowledge wider and stronger comprehensive ability, higher quality, to understand the strategic management theory in knowledge will have some difficulty. Therefore, it is necessary to constantly update theories and current affairs information in teaching, and provide abundant case supports to help students better sort out knowledge points.

On ability, "strategic management" course has the characteristics of integrity, long-term and overall situation, the mid-term when learning of the course content is not complete, limit the function of its theory to guide the practice of the play, but at the end of the semester, the students learned to see a problem, change thinking can improve their logical thinking ability and problem solving ability and applying knowledge to practice ability, etc. Therefore, at the beginning of each semester, the plan and design of the whole semester can be explained clearly, so that students can clarify the teaching process; At the same time, utilizing more advanced teaching technology software, students can be online or offline to collect relevant information, which could promote strategic thinking.

In terms of emotion, in the current diversified teaching practice, the interest of the course content has been popularized, which enhances students' learning desire and interest. The design of group discussion enhances the communication and affection between students, but there are also problems such as theoretical emptiness and too abstract. At the same time, students also put forward their expectations, for example, they hope to add more ideological and political content of current events into the course, and they hope to cultivate their innovative consciousness and ability through the course. Therefore, it requires teachers to constantly capture current affairs information, design ideological and political current affairs content into a number of case links, intersperse in the teaching contents, and inspire students to think and discuss.

#### 5. Suggestions for further improvement

In view of the problems existing in the implementation of diversified teaching methods and students' curriculum experiences, the following suggestions are proposed to improve the application of diversified teaching methods in the course of Strategic Management, in order to satisfy the needs of students:

### **5.1. Online and offline interaction**

Students hope to break the boundaries of time and space and the barriers of the school, so that they can learn the knowledge points they have forgotten again after class. They can realize the sharing of high-quality educational resources such as teaching materials and courses, books and materials, and experimental platforms through the cloud platform. The emergence of the Internet makes these become reality. Has to carry out the way of online education has brought great convenience for the students, but still some of the single mode, based on the curriculum construction concept of "gender once", "strategic management" course can take such as desire, live to share, open courses, modern information technology such as virtual reality, actively explore a teaching mode that suit the development of online teaching fusion, rich teaching resources.

Offline meeting classes are mostly presented in the form of inverted class. Different teaching methods and means are adopted for different teaching contents, including problem-oriented method, task-driven method and simulation teaching method [5]. In practice, the tasks of inverted class can be informed in advance by online platforms such as Lanmo and Chaoxing learning pass, and students can be prompted to use online platform resources for information collection. At the same time, with the help of the student mutual evaluation function of blue ink, learning pass and other software, students are allowed to participate in the evaluation activities of the team exhibition, so as to enhance the enthusiasm of students in the inverted class [5].

### **5.2. Case effectiveness**

In terms of the types of cases, students not only hope to track the systematicity of an enterprise [4] to integrate the knowledge, but also hope to add short and refined cases into each module of the course, so as to reflect a specific knowledge point of the course and gain a deeper understanding and mastery. In terms of the content of the case, students expect to be exposed to different types of industries or enterprises and obtain something that is appropriate to the actual business operation. In addition, the content of the case should be localized, so that students can get real feelings through their daily contact, which can improve students' interest and participation in the case. Finally, in terms of the form of case discussion, students believe that teachers can release cases in advance through various teaching platforms, such as WeChat group, QQ (Tencent) group and APP software, so that students can read and think about the cases carefully and play the role of preview in advance. In class, the discussion will be conducted in a team, with each team leading the class discussion, and with the help of the teacher, the theoretical combing and practice of each topic will be completed. Students believe that through this way can not only stimulate the enthusiasm for learning, but also develop the ability of coordination and communication, language skills and teamwork.

## **6. Conclusion**

The diversified teaching method reflects the student-oriented education and evaluates the effect of education by what students learn and how to learn. Under the background of teaching reform vigorously advocated by the Ministry of Education, applied courses such as Strategic Management actively carried out reforms in response to national policies, and applied diversified teaching methods such as inquiry, personalized, participatory and blended teaching in the curriculum. Through the analysis of the survey data, it has presented the actual information regarding the students' experiences towards diversified teaching methods, and students' variety abilities, such as communication, teamwork and practices, are improved. Regarding the problems when utilizing diversified teaching methods in Strategic Management, this research also has suggested that the online interaction, improve case effectiveness, and other teaching activities could help. As a result, in order to train more students to satisfied the social requirement, effectively adopting diversified teaching methods in courses, will not only benefit the students' innovation consciousness, strategic thinking and globalization perspective, but also cultivate students' comprehensive capabilities.

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