

# Teaching Inheritance and Innovation of Labor Economics Course in the New Era

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**Abstract.** China is currently at a crucial juncture of transforming and upgrading its traditional manufacturing industry, which entails a strategic choice of actively adapting to and leading a new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation. Simultaneously, the labor market is confronted with new developments and challenges. Labor economics, as an integral component of disciplines such as economics and management, plays a significant role in nurturing talents. However, the current teaching of “labor economics” courses mostly adheres to traditional classroom lecture modes, facing issues such as lagging knowledge updates and applications, as well as a disconnect between theory and practice. To achieve the inheritance and innovation of “labor economics” course teaching in the new era, it is imperative to integrate theory with practice, accelerate interdisciplinary integration between “labor economics” courses and other disciplines, establish a systematic curriculum and case library for labor economics, improve teaching methods, and uphold the classics while innovating and advancing in the teaching process of labor economics.

**Keywords:** Labor economics, Teaching reform, Inheritance and Innovation

## 1 Introduction

With the globalization of the economy and technological advancement, significant changes are occurring in the labor market’s operational mechanisms. In the post-pandemic era, China’s economy has entered a transformative stage set for the next crucial thirty years, focusing on high-quality development and embracing a new development pattern. Simultaneously, the Chinese economy is undergoing a crucial period of transitioning and upgrading towards modern services[1], with the emergence of new industries and enterprises increasing the demand for skilled and innovative workers in the job market. Meanwhile, traditional industries and the labor market are undergoing structural adjustments and transformations, posing new significant requirements for talent development in economic management disciplines. Labor economics, as one of the core courses in economics and management disciplines, carries the important mission of nurturing talents.

Labor economics, as a vital branch of applied economics, holds a prominent position in modern economics. Specifically, labor economics encompasses issues such as labor market supply and demand, employment, human resources, income distribution, and other societal concerns. It examines the labor market and how labor resources are allocated. Through studying labor economics, we can gain comprehensive insights into the labor market and its

various issues, serving as a reference for governments and businesses in formulating effective policies and planning enterprise management.

Currently, with socialism with Chinese characteristics entering a new era, economic development has shifted from high-speed growth to high-quality development. China faces increasingly severe employment situations, with issues such as employment, unemployment, and labor market development becoming increasingly important topics in economic life. Against this backdrop, the teaching of labor economics in the new era needs to inherit classical labor economic theories while exploring innovative teaching methods and content to cultivate comprehensive talents with extensive theoretical knowledge, practical abilities, and innovative awareness. This is an important task for the teaching of labor economics in the new era and a key measure to promote the adaptation of the labor market and talent cultivation to the needs of the times. This paper aims to analyze the current status, challenges, and problems faced by the teaching of “labor economics” courses in ordinary universities and propose feasible approaches for the inheritance and innovation of future “labor economics” course teaching models, hoping to provide references for the development of labor economics course teaching.

## **2 The purpose and present situation of “Labor economics” course teaching**

### **2.1 The purpose of teaching “Labor economics” course**

The teaching objectives of “Labor Economics” course aim to provide an in-depth study of the labor market’s operational mechanism, the relationship between labor supply and demand, the wage structure, and labor market policies. It is an economic discipline that enables students to comprehend and analyze various phenomena and problems in the labor market through the principles of economics. The course also helps to explain and predict the behavior and trends of the labor market. Furthermore, the course aims to develop students’ capacity to analyse and resolve genuine labour market issues, while also furnishing them with theoretical and practical assistance for their future professions.

### **2.2 The current situation of “labor economics” course teaching**

Currently, the curriculum content of the “labour economics” course has been progressively broadened to encompass a wider range of topics and more comprehensive research areas. Due to China’s accelerating economic transformation and the changes in the labour market, this course has become a crucial component of economics, management, and other related majors. It covers not only basic labor supply and demand theories and wage determination models but also practical topics such as labor market policies, labor contracts and labor relations, career development, and human resource management.

The teaching of labor economics currently relies heavily on lectures and theoretical materials. The teaching materials used in “labour economics” courses in China are primarily based on the labour theory and market practices of Western countries. This can make it challenging for Chinese students to apply the theories they learn to the realities of China’s labour market. Additionally, some of the abstract theoretical models discussed in the textbooks can be unclear and tedious, which hinders students’ learning and comprehension. Regarding teaching

methods, although interactive techniques such as case studies, field trips, and group discussions have been introduced, their implementation still requires improvement. Additionally, there is a need to explore ways to enhance students' practical and problem-solving skills. The teaching of "labour economics" courses must be diversified, interactive, and practical to meet the needs and challenges of the continuously developing society and economy.

### **3 Problems and challenges facing the current teaching of the "labor economics" course**

#### **3.1 The disconnect between scientific theory and practical application**

In the current era, the labour market is rapidly changing and developing. Therefore, the curriculum content needs to be constantly updated and adjusted to reflect the latest realities. Simultaneously, students should not only acquire scientific theories but also develop problem-solving skills and enhance their thinking and practical abilities through the application of these theories [2]. However, in current teaching of "labour economics" course,, most instruction is based on classroom lectures using course materials. This can lead to slow updates in teaching knowledge and a disconnection between theory and practice. While knowledge is important in economics teaching, research methods and economic thinking are more valuable. Mastery of labour economics theory is essential for accurate application of its methodology in studying new changes and phenomena in the labour market, and subsequently solving new problems. Therefore, in teaching labour economics, it is important to not only impart theoretical knowledge but also focus on developing students' practical skills. Combining theoretical knowledge with practical application is a challenging task. This enables students to flexibly apply what they have learned to solve real-life problems.

#### **3.2 Relative lack of teaching resources and cases**

In recent years, new phenomena and problems have arisen in China's labour market. When teaching labour economics, it is crucial to select appropriate cases, as good cases can elicit positive responses. Additionally, case teaching can foster students' critical thinking skills [3]. Currently, labor economics courses in China suffer from a lack of localized case resources. Most cases in labor economics textbooks are from Western countries, which may help students apply Western economic theories to analyze and solve problems, but fail to reflect the unique characteristics of China's labor market during the transition period. China's labour market faces several challenges, including an ageing population, education mismatch, surplus labour in rural areas, and difficulties in employment for young people. Despite having learned classical theories in class, students often struggle to apply them to the realities of the labour market in China. Furthermore, while experts and scholars in China continue to publish teaching materials for "labour economics" courses with Chinese characteristics, there remains a dearth of professional and practical resources for such courses in China. Additionally, there is a lack of practical teaching resources available for "labour economics" courses in China. In addition, there is limited access to and use of practical teaching resources. Therefore, constructing and maintaining a targeted and practical teaching platform is crucial for improving the course's teaching quality.

### **3.3 Shortcomings of the traditional teaching model**

Currently, the “labour economics” course in China is primarily taught through traditional classroom lectures. In this mode, the teacher explains the theoretical system outlined in the textbook, and students memorize and master the knowledge through post-course exercises and other activities. Relevant supporting assignments are provided, and the knowledge is assessed through examinations. However, this approach does not effectively transmit knowledge to the students. The transfer of knowledge is often limited to books. This unidirectional teaching mode emphasises the one-way transmission of knowledge, lacks teacher-student interaction, and ignores the fact that students are the main body of the classroom. As a result, it may be difficult to stimulate students’ interest and initiative in learning. Additionally, much of traditional teaching relies heavily on textbooks and employs singular teaching methods. This can result in textbooks becoming a hindrance to students' free creativity and bold innovation, which is not conducive to cultivating students’ creative thinking. This approach does not truly cater to the needs of individual students.

## **4 The realization path of teaching inheritance and innovation of “labor economics” course in the new era**

### **4.1 Integration of theory and practice**

Inheriting classical labour economics theory, the focus should be on linking theoretical knowledge with practical reality. This can be achieved through case analysis after traditional theoretical learning, followed by strengthening practical teaching links such as internships, practical training, project design, and field trips. This will guide students to apply theoretical knowledge to solve practical problems, forming an “active classroom” [4]. This approach can enhance students’ understanding of the operation mechanism of the labour market and practical skills, thereby improving their practical and problem-solving abilities. Furthermore, it is advisable to motivate teachers to engage in academic research and teaching practices to enhance their professionalism and teaching skills. This will enable the implementation of the “theory and practice” teaching approach from both the teacher’s and student’s perspectives.

### **4.2 Interdisciplinary integration of the “labor economics” course**

The integration of disciplines is an inevitable result of the new scientific and technological revolution. Labor economics, as a branch of economics that studies the labor market, involves a complex and meticulous process in the design of interdisciplinary integrated courses, selection of teaching methods, and establishment of assessment criteria. First, labor economics is related to multiple disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and law, and the curriculum design should incorporate relevant knowledge from these fields, such as the impact of labor law on the labor market. During the teaching process, a large number of teaching cases will be introduced to introduce knowledge from different disciplines, which will help students understand the problems existing in the labor market. By analyzing specific labor market cases, introducing the latest research findings and development trends in labor economics and related disciplines, students can better understand the combination of theory and practice. In terms of course content, in addition to introducing classic labor economics topics, the intersection of

health economics, digital economy and labor economics is also introduced. For example, studying the health inequalities among employees with different incomes is a cross-research topic between labor economics and health economics. For another example, the issue of new employment forms in the platform economy is the intersection of digital economics and labor economics. Second, methods such as group discussions and field trips can enhance students' engagement and depth of understanding in labor economics. This will be discussed in depth in section 4.3. Last, in terms of assessment, written exams can evaluate students' grasp of basic theories and concepts, supplemented by case analysis reports or project assignments to assess their ability to analyze practical problems and apply theoretical knowledge. Practical assessment is also an important form. Students can be led to companies to have an in-depth understanding of the company's employment model, and students can be grouped into different industries to conduct research and analyze problems existing in the labor market in different industries. Practical scores are also one of the main ways to assess students.

#### **4.3 Enrichment and innovation of teaching methods of “labor economics” course**

The teaching reform of labour economics in the new era should change the traditional teaching method based on lecture, explore diversified teaching methods and means, and cultivate students' cooperative learning and economic thinking ability as the main teaching goals. For example, the “task + project” driven teaching model can integrate learning tasks, projects, activities, results and other resources together, so that students can learn in a specific context [5]. The teaching mode of “case presentation” + “case discussion” effectively expands students' thinking and analytical ability through case analysis [6]; Interactive flipped classroom teaching is to return the initiative of learning to students[7]; in addition, there are also problem-oriented learning, group cooperative learning, online education and so on. At the same time, curriculum evaluation is also very important, which can help students improve their learning attitude and improve their learning effect through process evaluation and project skill evaluation [8]. In addition, the use of informatized teaching platform to realize the sharing and exchange of teaching resources is also an effective way to enrich teaching methods.

#### **4.4 Construction of “labor economics” curriculum system and case library**

Cases have the function of cultivating students' analytical ability and application ability. At present, there is a relative lack of case resources in the teaching of “labour economics”, which makes it difficult for students to understand and analyse the current situation and problems of China's labour market with the theory of labour economics. Therefore, collecting real cases of China's labour market and combining foreign cases with domestic cases can be an effective means to understand and analyse the current situation and problems of China's labour market. The course cases must closely follow the curriculum and course content, which can not only highlight the focus of the course, but also cultivate students' independent thinking and analysis ability. The contents of the cases should be as rich as possible, closely related to China's national conditions and times, and problem-oriented to stimulate students' thinking and active learning.

## 5 Conclusions

In the new era, the teaching of “labour economics” course must inherit the classical theory and be innovative. Inheritance means in-depth interpretation of classical theories and effective continuation of traditional methods, including solid teaching of labour market, wage determination, labour organisation and other aspects. However, innovation is also essential, especially in view of today’s rapidly changing labour market and the impact of new technologies. The teaching of “labour economics” should combine theory and practice, build a case base of “labour economics” courses, examine labour economics issues from an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspective, expand the boundaries of students’ thinking, and constantly enrich and innovate teaching methods, so as to better carry forward and develop the teaching of “labour economics” in the new era, and improve the teaching of “labour economics” in the new era, so as to cultivate high-quality talents who can meet the demands of the times and contribute to the development of the labour market and the prosperity of the social economy.

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