

Research on Cultivating Academic Literacy of Academic Graduate Students

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Abstract: With the growing number of graduate students, it is critical to improve the quality of graduate education. By defining the connotation and extension of academic literacy, combined with the existing problems of academic graduate students, we constructed an academic literacy cultivation system for academic graduate students from four aspects: curriculum system reform, teaching method reform, academic guidance relationship between tutors and students, and academic exchange platforms, which puts forward relevant institutional mechanisms to provide a feasible path for improving academic literacy.

Keywords: Academic Literacy; Academic Postgraduates; Cultivation System.

1. Introduction

With the continued popularization of higher education, graduate student enrollment has expanded substantially in recent years. According to the *National Education Development Statistics Report 2022*, there are 3,636,000 graduate students enrolled, of which 3,097,500 are master students. Gradually, "quantitative change" has given way to "qualitative change" in graduate education. The revision of the graduate categorization training model proposes different criteria for academic graduate students and applied graduate students, and the separation is becoming increasingly clear.

The aim of academic graduate students' training is to develop academic talents with a severe and realistic scientific attitude, a rigid and standardized study style, a firm foundation in professional theory, and the ability to conduct independent research.

Therefore, academic postgraduate training is primarily focused on the development of academic literacy, which is not only an important manifestation of graduate students' cultivation quality, but also a major component influencing postgraduates' innovation ability. However, there are still problems in the academic literacy cultivation for academic graduate students in China in general, such as a lack of academic awareness of question and innovation, poor academic knowledge, mismatched curriculum and knowledge structure; lacking of academic ability in language expression and problem solving, and a weak level of academic moral construction. So, it is crucial for universities to cultivate academic literacy of academic graduate students in order to enhance the overall cultivation quality of postgraduates.

This paper first defines the connotation and extension of academic literacy, then builds an academic literacy cultivation system for academic graduate students based on four aspects: curriculum system reform, teaching method reform, academic guidance relationship between tutors and students, and academic exchange platforms, and finally proposes a system and mechanism guarantee in academic literacy cultivation.

2. The Connotation and Extension of Academic Literacy

Harvard University has defined academic literacy in eight

ways: 1) The ability to define problems and ask complex questions; 2) The critical thinking ability to challenge popular views; 3) The ability to extract required information from irrelevant one and reorganize it after conceptualization; 4) The ability to propose and answer difficulties exploringly; 5) The ability to think inductively, deductively, dialectically, and logically; 6) The ability to discuss opinions pragmatically; 7) The ability to explain thoughts and convince others; 8) The ability to operate both independently and collaboratively.

Scholars argue that, in addition to deconstructing academic literacy, it should become an external criterion, which is a basic attribute that scientific researchers possess. Cai (2020) believes that academic literacy is the requirement of higher education for students to engage in professional study and become high-quality citizens. Zhang et al. (2020) argue that academic literacy is the fundamental capacity and quality of academic research, which ensures that learners can understand the connotation and usage of knowledge faster.

In recent years, Chinese scholars have tended to view academic literacy as a holistic embodiment of graduate students' talents, including academic awareness, academic knowledge, academic competence, and academic ethics. However, academic literacy cultivation is a systematic undertaking rather than a specific ability improvement or reform measure. At the same time, in the practice of teaching reform, it is necessary to know not only what to do, but also how to accomplish it.

As a result, it is critical to strengthen academic graduate students' current academic quality cultivation standards and to construct an all-around integrated academic graduate student quality cultivation system.

3. The Cultivation System Construction

There are several issues with academic graduate students' academic literacy, which express as: poor academic awareness and original concepts; small academic knowledge accumulation and outdated cutting-edge knowledge; limited academic skill and level; inadequate academic ethics awareness, and so on.

Combined with the understanding of academic literacy

connotation and extension, this study constructs an academic literacy cultivation system from four aspects: curriculum system reform, teaching method reform, academic guidance relationship between tutors and students, and academic exchange platforms, to enhance graduate students' academic literacy.

3.1. Curriculum System Reform

(1) Increase frontier and transdisciplinary knowledge, ensure the quality of core professional courses, and eliminate professional compulsory and selective courses. Academic research at the postgraduate level requires not only a sound theoretical base, but also the cultivation of inventive consciousness and mastery of frontier hotspots. It is allowed to get double the result with half the work when the teacher provides students with refined and integrated information during the class. The postgraduate stage allows for unrestricted thinking. To minimize repetitive learning of undergraduate knowledge, interdisciplinary knowledge should be integrated into course instruction, which not only helps students improve their knowledge framework, but also exercises their thinking mode, broadens their horizons, and enhances their innovation ability.

Simultaneously, cross-major postgraduate studies are becoming more widespread, posing a new challenge for the core professional courses teaching. Maintaining the teaching quality and ensuring that students master the subject's basic theoretical knowledge are crucial for students' future academic research. Furthermore, unwanted compulsory and selective courses might be suitably decreased in order to improve students' autonomous learning ability and avoid repetitive learning of basic knowledge.

(2) Offer academic paper instruction to help students improve writing skills. The entire process of thesis writing comprises topic selection, literature collecting, first draft, revision, and finalization. Offering a specialized academic paper writing course can not only help students become acquainted with the nuances of the process as soon as feasible, but also guide students to independently investigate the research value, structural layout, writing norms, and literature learning methods. In the thesis writing class, in particular, it can also add specific teaching methods such as professional terminology, statistical analysis of data, chart drawing, academic ethics and so on, so as to improve writing abilities effectively.

3.2. Teaching Method Reform

(1) A suitable syllabus is critical to improve teaching quality, since the conventional teaching method is no longer effective. On this basis, it is proposed that the teaching goal should be to develop students' theoretical and practical competence, and that reform should be implemented in a variety of areas, including curriculum objectives, professional objectives, teaching techniques, and curricular assignments. Interactive learning and autonomous learning, for example, can be incorporated to the instructional approaches, allowing students to engage in inspired thinking and independent deconstruction.

(2) Use a variety of teaching styles in basic education. Carry out lessons in a heuristic manner, for example. Exam-oriented education's conventional instruction technique is one-way teaching, which is inefficient in conveying knowledge and ignores the cultivation of academic comprehension and practical capacity. In heuristic teaching,

students can switch from "passive listening" to "active questioning", thinking more effectively in a restricted learning environment, which significantly enhances teaching quality. Simultaneously, inquiry instruction can inspire students to study independently and, to some part, exercise their thinking inventiveness.

(3) Increase the proportion of professional academic explanations and discussion in class. It allows to understand the research direction, methods and results of scholars in the field, so as to learn logical thinking and writing ideas dialectically and internalize them, which is of great benefit to improving academic ability. Meanwhile, it is beneficial to develop a positive academic atmosphere by discussing and resolving difficulties through academic paper discussions.

3.3. Academic Guidance Relationship between Tutors and Graduate Students

(1) Establish academic tutor and student roles. The tutor, as the first person in charge of postgraduate education, ought to dedicate his or her whole attention to the educational role. As an academic authority, professors should develop their professional sensitivity, participate in advice when graduate students are upset in academic activities, assuming the guidance duty. Academic graduate students are preparing to be researchers, so they must set high expectations for themselves, keeping the purpose of academic talents in mind and preserving academic passion with a strong internal driving force.

(2) Upgrade the tutor-student relationship system. Professors and students should have a connection based on academic counseling. Students take the initiative to ask tutors, and tutors teaches how to solve confusion and handle difficulties. Policies and procedures should formally issue system standards pertaining to daily study and scientific researches, establish the border between professors and students, and attempt to eliminate the influence of non-academic projects. To implement it in relevant school departments, practical system documents must be developed in light of the current situation. And specific norms must be applied in tutors and students' performance appraisal, such as the qualification examination of tutors, the evaluation of professional titles, the entrance of students, and the evaluation of students. Form a benign academic supervision connection between teachers and students from the beginning, and gradually make the boundary of authority and responsibility, interest and action clearer.

(3) Encourage equal engagement between professors and students. A harmonious tutor-student connection can foster inspiration collision and academic innovation; thus, professors and students should cultivate a culture of freedom, equality, respect, and tolerance. To inspire students, tutors should encourage mutual learning, friendly respect and equal communication in scientific study. Graduate students should remove red tape, get near to ask with respect, and actively communicate with tutors in order to increase their academic quality in a peaceful cohabitation.

3.4. Academic Exchange Platforms

(1) More seminars help to raise the academic level of postgraduates with expanding the school's influence. The school should conduct all-around, multi-level, and high-quality academic exchange activities inside the school, across schools, and even globally, allowing graduate students to participate in academic exchanges. Participants in the

academic seminar will concentrate on the same research direction and hotspots, so that students can objectively understand the research value and development concept of the subject direction through the reports of renowned scholars.

Meanwhile, encouraging graduate students to attend academic conferences both at home and abroad is a crucial way to establish an intellectual platform. Attending academic conferences abroad to learn about other researchers' newly formed academic achievements has tremendously enlarged horizons in a high-level academic environment.

(2) Increase academic activities on campus contribute to the academic exchange platforms. On campus, the school or college can invite experts and scholars from home and abroad to give academic lectures and reports, or invite professional journalists to conduct special training for postgraduates in academic paper writing and submission, even host high-level academic speeches, debates, and other competitions in this major or across disciplines. It is advisable to expand the scale of activities on the basis of the existing one, and strive to create a general academic atmosphere among the tutors and students of the whole university.

(3) Apply Internet to supplement online academic activities. With the popularity of network offices and the rapid advancement of online video conferencing technology, video conferencing has, to some extent, decreased the threshold of academic meetings. Academic communication means are more diverse and efficient. Simultaneously, online forums, WeChat Official Accounts, and other platforms are no longer bound by time and space, and academic achievements may be shared at any time and from any location. There are no barriers to academic interactions, which considerably increases students' motivation to participate in academic activities.

4. The Institutional Guarantee

A flourishing academic system is crucial for the development of scientific research thinking, the maintenance of academic vitality, and academic independence. The school institutional guarantee is vital in improving the academic quality of academic postgraduates.

On the one hand, the graduate school, academic affairs, finance, and other relevant departments collaborate and develop policies to create an incentive mechanism for academic literacy development. The traditional academic incentive structure is output-focused, ignores the process of academic innovation, and lacks rewards for students' innovative thinking. Given this, it is advised that the assessment system should be rebuilt and that the weight of some academic successes, such as academic innovation, should be moved to process achievements to prevent the evaluation mechanism from becoming rigid and unfair.

Guided by the graduate school, worked with Academic Affairs Office, it comprehensively evaluates students' scientific research experience and learning level, uses the people-oriented principle, the fairness principle, and the dynamic principle as evaluation standards, and integrates the dynamic factors, risk factors, and elastic factors of academic research into the evaluation system. According to different disciplines, it conducts category assessment and discusses the evaluation with the finance office to implement incentive measures, such as bonus incentives, research equipment, and teaching aids.

On the other hand, it provides institutional guarantee for the reform of curriculum system and teaching methods,

develops relevant policies to regulate the relationship between tutors and students and offers financial assistance for seminars. It is essential to update the assessment standards on a regular basis, guarantee that the reform of the curriculum and teaching techniques proceeds steadily, and provide students with a new meaning as part of the evaluation system for teaching quality.

In terms of the academic guidance relationship between teachers and students, it is supposed to improve the relevant system norms, provide academic guidance incentives and material assistance to tutors, increase their sense of teacher responsibility, and eliminate non-academic task arrangements. Graduate students should be offered academic incentives to increase their learning initiative. The system should clearly stipulate an equal relationship between tutors and students, and communication barriers should be removed to make common progress.

As the initiator, to improve postgraduate quality, the school must take on the task of providing an interdisciplinary and high-starting academic exchange platforms for graduate students, establishing a scientific and reasonable incentive mechanism for academic participation, mobilizing students' research motivation, and maximizing graduate students' innovative potential.

Simultaneously, in order to shape and sustain a long-term academic atmosphere, schools should provide a reliable guarantee for the construction of academic platforms, such as regularly publicizing the convening of seminars and providing financial support, reimbursing the travel expenses of graduate students attending academic conferences, and actively contacting outstanding scholars in disciplines to give academic lectures so that can ensure the healthy development of scientific knowledge.

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