

# Four Bottlenecks and Their Solutions in the Training of Applied Talents in Independent Colleges

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## ABSTRACT

According to the spirit of the relevant documents of the Ministry of Education, independent colleges aim to train applied talents. The reality is that there are a series of constraints in the training process of applied talents in independent colleges. The survey shows that they are mainly reflected in the four major bottlenecks of student source recognition, teacher matching, management coordination, and cultural construction. Therefore, it is necessary to seek solutions from the levels of education authorities, independent college management, partners, training objects, and employers.

**Keywords:** independent colleges, training of applied talents, bottlenecks, solutions

## I. INTRODUCTION

Independent colleges refer specifically to secondary colleges at the undergraduate level organized by ordinary undergraduate colleges and universities based on new mechanisms, new models, and social forces. At present, there are still several major bottlenecks in the realization of the applied talent training goals of independent colleges. Analyzing and discussing their solutions will help improve the quality of independent colleges and promote the continuous and healthy development of independent colleges and the completion of the transfer work.

## II. BOTTLENECK OF STUDENT SOURCE RECOGNITION

The quantity and quality of students have always been a special concern when enrolling students in colleges and universities, and they are also the basic guarantee for the survival and development of independent colleges. In the current enrollment process, in order to ensure the completion of the enrollment plan, many independent colleges often adopt enrollment strategies such as opening majors that students or parents like but are not very practical to attract candidates to apply, which are very different from the talent training goals of independent colleges. In fact, since China's higher education still belongs to the seller's market, and because independent colleges arrange batch admission for undergraduates, few schools fail to complete their enrollment plan. It is only due to the higher fees of independent colleges, the biased understanding of the independent colleges by candidates and the popularity of the parent colleges, etc., that the registration rate of some independent colleges

is low. In response to this problem, local admissions authorities have taken corresponding measures, such as arranging supplementary enrollment for institutions that have not completed the plan after registration. Therefore, in terms of the number of students, many independent colleges are often a little unfounded.

In terms of quality, judging from the situation in recent years, the scores of the third tier of undergraduate enrollment across the country are generally lower than those of the second tier by more than 40 points. This has led many people, including many university teachers and scholars, to broadly believe that the quality of students under the colleges of the third tier is lower than that of the two colleges, leading many independent colleges to take some measures that are inconsistent with the cultivation of applied talents. Since the score is an objective reflection of the quality of the student source, from the point of view of the score dimension, the student source quality of the third-tier college students is indeed obviously lower. Judging from the dimensions of quality education and the training objectives of independent colleges, the quality of students in third-tier colleges is not lower than that of students in second-tier colleges. A large number of investigations and research results show that although the students of the third-tier colleges have relatively poor cultural foundation, their comprehensive qualities are relatively high. The group characteristics of the students of the third-tier colleges are mainly: flexible mind, strong hands-on ability, wide interest, and good communication ability, etc. It can be said that in terms of the quality characteristics of applied talent training, the students of the third-tier colleges are not inferior to the students of the second-tier college, and to a certain extent, these characteristics are more conducive to the realization of the training

goals of applied talents of independent colleges. Those who broadly believe that the student sources of the third-tier colleges are of poor quality tend to ignore this fact: Under the current education system, college admissions are conducted in batches according to the college entrance examination results. There is a big gap between first-tier, second-tier, and third-tier college students and the students of higher vocational colleges in test scores. However, candidates from different admission tiers only have different knowledge structures and different abilities, which do not mean that they have different qualities.

The above-mentioned erroneous cognition of the number and quality of the student sources is the current bottleneck of the student source recognition that has plagued the cultivation of applied talents in independent colleges. The main ideas for solving this bottleneck are: The first is about the higher education administrative department, all walks of life, and independent colleges themselves. When evaluating the quality of education in independent colleges, traditional knowledge quality evaluation cannot be used as the sole criterion. A new, developmental, diversified, adaptable, holistic, and characteristic view of education quality must be established to completely solve the misunderstanding of the source of students and promote the realization of the goal of training applied talents in independent colleges. The second is that local admissions planning authorities should allocate admissions plans scientifically and reasonably according to the development needs of independent colleges as much as possible, instead of blindly increasing the plan according to a certain proportion. For independent colleges that have reached a certain scale, no more enrollment plans should be added, while for smaller independent colleges, certain enrollment plans can be appropriately increased, and reasonable measures should be taken to ensure the completion of the enrollment plans of each college. The third is that independent colleges should gradually shift from the pursuit of scale development to the pursuit of quality connotation construction.

### **III. BOTTLENECK OF TEACHER MATCHING**

Whether the training objectives, training specifications, and teaching plans of independent colleges for applied undergraduates can be implemented in the specific teaching process depends on whether they have a team of high-quality teachers with both solid theoretical knowledge and rich practical experience. Judging from the current faculty composition of independent colleges, apart from a small number of full-time teachers, they are mainly teachers from the parent colleges. Teachers in the parent colleges and universities do not have any problems in theoretical teaching, but they generally do not have experience in front-line practical positions such as enterprises, and their professional skills do not meet the

requirements of practical teaching. Moreover, these teachers are mainly responsible for the teaching and research tasks of the parent colleges and universities, and will not easily change the teaching plan and teaching style because of the different training goals of the third-tier college students. Most of the full-time teachers are newly introduced talents from independent colleges in recent years. Judging from the introduction conditions, the overwhelming majority of people emphasize academic qualifications. Few independent colleges consider the vocational skills of talents in recruitment, and few independent colleges select talents from companies and other practices. This is not only the reason why such talents are unwilling to work in independent colleges, but also the inertia factors of the current evaluation of talents and the evaluation of professional titles in Chinese colleges and universities, but more importantly, the problem of the concept of independent colleges' own employment. In addition, since full-time teachers often lack scientific research capabilities, and many short-term teachers from parent colleges lack the motivation to cultivate applied talents, this has led to difficulties in subject construction and teaching and research in independent colleges. It can be said that the current faculty of independent colleges can hardly guarantee the quality of applied talent training in independent colleges.

The difference between the existing teacher qualifications of independent colleges and the training requirements of applied talents is the bottleneck of teacher matching that currently plagues the training of applied talents in independent colleges. The main ideas for solving this bottleneck are as follows: The first is that when the educational administrative departments at all levels formulate the independent college education qualification evaluation plan, the teacher evaluation indicators should not blindly emphasize academic qualifications, but should increase the evaluation indicators for applied teachers. The second is that independent colleges should change their concept of employment: When introducing talents, it is necessary to examine not only academic factors, but also factors such as ability, skills, and experience, and introduce some professional managers with practical experience and intermediate and senior professional titles from the industry; When training talents, it is also necessary to consider the direction of bipolar teaching talents; When hiring short-term teachers, it should consider the requirements of application-oriented talent training, and change the situation of over-reliance on teachers from home institutions; When formulating incentive mechanisms, especially salary incentive mechanisms, the performance of teachers should be highlighted, that is, teachers' contributions in the process of training applied talents, not just factors such as academic qualifications and titles. The third is that the personnel department should change the traditional job title

evaluation method. When designing the job title evaluation program, the promotion needs of bipolar teaching talents should be considered, and the series of abilities and skills should be added.

#### **IV. BOTTLENECK OF MANAGEMENT COORDINATION**

To implement collaborative management, only one platform is needed to centrally manage all collaborative information. However, management collaboration is much more difficult. It not only requires a platform, but also requires in-depth management experience and institutional arrangements for knowledge management. The goal is to synchronize management with goals. According to the requirements of the Ministry of Education for running independent colleges, independent colleges should mainly meet the needs of regional economic and social development and cultivate short-term applied talents who are in short supply in the society and human resources market. This requires that all management activities of the independent colleges should be synchronized with this goal. However, the current situation is that the series of management activities of most independent colleges are not in line with the talent training goals of independent colleges. The main manifestations are:

The first is that the use of the resources of independent college partners is not deep enough. As investors, the partners are mostly corporate units with profound practical accumulation and many experienced management talents. These are undoubtedly valuable resources for the training of applied talents in independent colleges. However, most independent colleges are often not enough in the development and utilization of their partners, they do not have in-depth cooperation with the partners, and the partners often only care about the return on investment.

The second is the insufficient optimization of the leadership team of the independent colleges. In accordance with the spirit of the relevant documents, the independent college implements the dean responsibility system under the leadership of the board of directors, and the dean is responsible for collective decision-making on major issues such as the college's funding, direction, scale, personnel system, and student fees. However, the reality is that as the main person in charge of an independent college — the power of appointment of the dean is mainly in the organizer, and the board of directors only plays a nominal role. The qualifications and treatment of most independent college deans are consistent with those of the secondary colleges of the organizer, and a considerable part of them are transferred from the secondary college staff of the host colleges. Most of the deans of these independent colleges only have teaching or some management experience, and other leadership team

members also lack direct experience in the training of applied talents. As for industry managers or those who have extensive experience in cultivating applied talents, they rarely enter the collective leadership team, resulting in that the leadership team lacks certain macro-management skills as well as experience accumulation in the training of applied talents. As a result, management is often copied from the non-applied talent training experience of the host colleges.

The third is that the independent colleges' teaching management system is not well matched with the training objectives. The training goals of independent college students are different from the parent colleges, and the specific training process should fully reflect this difference. However, since most of the teachers and teaching administrators of independent colleges come from the parent colleges and universities, the educational philosophy, teaching content and methods, and management models of the parent colleges may be transplanted to the independent colleges intentionally or unintentionally. Judging from the current situation, many independent colleges have not yet formed their own teaching management systems. They either adopt a cloned parent model, a partial improvement model, or a degraded training model. Regardless of the models, the particularity of independent colleges is ignored, leading to the loss of the talent training goals of independent colleges. In addition, the applied talent training model of independent colleges requires students to conduct more practice and quality development activities during the school period, which requires more funding. However, judging from the current situation, due to the eagerness of the partners to recover the investment and the requisition of part of the management funds for the institutions, the funds that the independent colleges can really control are often limited, and the large amounts of funds required for practical teaching are difficult to guarantee. Therefore, although the professional teaching plans of most independent colleges include a lot of practical hours in order to reflect the requirements of applied talent training, the actual implementation is often not much. What's more, in order to reduce the cost of running a school, many independent colleges have adopted measures to reduce applied majors and increase enrollment plans for non-applied majors.

The current mismatch between the management of independent colleges and the training objectives is the management coordination bottleneck restricting the training of applied talents in independent colleges. The main ideas for breaking this bottleneck are as follows: the first is that the board of directors should play the role of the board of directors and conduct in-depth exploration of the teaching resources of the partners, so as to truly form a win-win situation between the independent colleges and the partners. The second is to scientifically evaluate the position of the dean of an independent college. On this basis, multi-channel

selection of functionally matched expert leaders who are familiar with applied talent training should be appointed as the dean, and team members should be reasonably equipped. Team members should pay attention to recruiting people with senior technical titles and rich practical experience. The third is that the management should make a scientific positioning based on the actual situation of the college, form a reasonable vision for the training of applied talents, formulate and implement the training plan, and pay attention to the "objectives and requirements of the training of applied talents in independent colleges" in the teaching management process. Fourth, the host colleges should give independent colleges more autonomy in running schools, allow and encourage independent colleges to adopt various reform measures and innovate talent training models, such as accelerating the development of short-term majors urgently needed by the society and human resources market, establishing a curriculum system that focuses on cultivating students' abilities and skills, increasing the cutting-edge professional elective courses or public elective courses urgently needed for the current social and economic development, increasing the proportion of practical hours, arranging more internships, and establishing various experimental practice bases, etc. They also should integrate vocational skills training into the talent training plan to meet the requirements of independent colleges for talent training.

## V. BOTTLENECK OF CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION

From the perspective of the individual level, culture plays the role of shaping individual personality and realizing socialization; from the group level, culture plays the role of integrating goals, norms, opinions and actions; from the overall social level, culture plays the role of social integration and social guidance. Creating a cultural atmosphere for the cultivation of applied talents in independent colleges from a multi-dimensional perspective is conducive to the realization of the goal of talent cultivation in independent colleges. However, the current situation is as follows: First, the schools lack in creating a campus cultural environment that is conducive to the cultivation of applied talents. The campus culture is roughly the same as that of the parent colleges in terms of material and spiritual aspects, such as vigorously encouraging students to take postgraduate entrance examinations and focusing on learning knowledge from books, etc., but lacks enough attention on the development of students' application ability, creativity, and professional-related practical activities. The second is for students and parents: they do not know or agree with the applied talent training program. Independent college students often lack the correct understanding of themselves, lack the recognition of the independent college training program.

Many students do not even know their training goals, often compare themselves with the students of the parent college, and are willing to follow them as goals. There are many students' parents who don't know or approve of application-oriented talent training programs. They often ask their children to learn more. Of course, learning here refers to the learning of book knowledge. As for practical activities, although they are not opposed, they do not give enough support. The third is the social aspect: At present, there are still phenomena such as emphasizing academic qualifications and neglecting ability. For example, in some places, the recruitment notices for civil servants and teachers clearly stated that they don't want independent college graduates. All these restrict the formation of the applied talent training atmosphere of independent colleges, and affect the realization of the talent training goals of independent colleges.

These factors from schools, students, parents, society and other aspects that affect the formation of the cultural atmosphere for the cultivation of applied talents in independent colleges are the bottleneck of cultural construction that restricts the cultivation of applied talents in independent colleges. The main ideas for solving this bottleneck are as follows: First, the independent colleges should create a cultural atmosphere that is conducive to the cultivation of applied talents from the material and spiritual level, strive to establish a training base for applied talents, and encourage students to participate in professional-related practical activities. Second, independent colleges should use various channels to enable teachers, students and parents to fully understand the applied personnel training program and to enable students to improve their employability toward the requirements of applied talent training, and parents should provide students with sufficient support. Third, the competent authorities should issue corresponding policies to oppose employment discrimination, urge users to establish a correct concept of employment, and adhere to the principle of job matching, so as to create a social and cultural atmosphere that is conducive to the cultivation of applied talents.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Independent colleges are secondary colleges at the undergraduate level organized by ordinary undergraduate colleges and universities in cooperation with social forces in accordance with new mechanisms and new models, and aim to train applied talents. The emergence of independent colleges has made important contributions to the development of higher education in China. At the same time, as a new thing, there are also a series of restrictive factors in the training process of applied talents, which are mainly reflected in four bottlenecks of student source recognition, teacher matching, management coordination, and cultural

construction. Just like this, the Ministry of Education proposed to make transformation of independent colleges. Obviously, even if the transformation is completed, these constraints will not be eliminated immediately. The author believes that for the healthy and sustainable development of these schools, it is necessary to seek solutions from the levels of education authorities, independent college management, partners, training objects, and employers.

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