

# Research on Improvement of Course Construction Capability of University Counselors from the Perspective of High-efficiency "Empowering" A Case Study of University of Electronic Science and Technology of China

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## ABSTRACT

In Higher Education in China, the counselor group assumes the dual roles in student affairs management and teaching, and is active on the front line of education. In emphasizing the professionalism and professional development of the counselor team, a system in which counselors "stand on the podium" are practiced is an important avenue to the professionalization of counselor education. By empirically analyzing the five semester course construction of counselors at the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, "teaching method empowerment model", "major leading empowerment model", "process management empowerment model" and other courses "empowerment" energy efficiency improvement mechanism and feedback pathways were proposed, which provided help for the counselor group to "step onto the podium" and "stand well on the podium".

**Keywords:** *Counselor, Course construction, Empowering efficiency, Stepwise regression, Model construction, Feedback pathways.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary higher education, comprehensive quality-oriented education should be taken as the central link to achieve all-member, whole-process and all-round education (hereinafter referred to as "All-around Human Education"). Focusing on the talent training objectives of colleges and universities in the new era, it is required that we continue to deepen the reform of the "All-around Human Education" model, with a good deal of effort devoted to the high degree, strength, and effectiveness of nurturing people, and realistically advance the fundamental task of the

moral education.

College counselors, as the front-line force that most closely resembles the daily life and moral education of college students, are the key link in talents' cultivation. In the new situation, how to enable counselors from different professional backgrounds to have professional ability and theoretical knowledge to play their professional functions, how to build a suitable course for counselors to teach, so that counselors can step on the podium and stand well? How to combine moral education with professional education? How to motivate counselors to think, study, prepare, give lectures, observe and exchange with questions, as well as to stimulate their internal motivation to pay attention to the improvement of curriculum quality? These problems have become very important and need being solved urgently in promoting the

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specialization and professionalization of the college counselor team in an all-round way.

## **2. RESEARCH STATUS OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN COUNSELOR EDUCATION MODEL**

### ***2.1 Analysis of Education in Foreign Universities***

There are some similarities between the western developed countries in terms of the work of colleges, all of which emphasize that the subjects of colleges and universities work in addition to dedicated teachers include all other people who can have an impact on college students, and emphasize the cooperation between the subjects of all colleges and the cross talk between disciplines. First, educational work in American colleges and Universities: In terms of the concept of running a school, American colleges and universities choose general education as the main channel of education, emphasizing that all teachers and administrative personnel in the university are jointly responsible for helping and promoting the all-round development of Undergraduates in professional knowledge, skills and ideological and ethical aspects. Similar to the Students' Affairs Office (Division) set up by Chinese colleges and universities, the student affairs management organization of American colleges and universities provides patriotism education, political outlook education and religious knowledge education to college students through consultation and other means [1]. Second, educational work in Universities in Britain, France and Japan: Educational work in British colleges and universities extensively and deeply develops recessive moral education by setting up special moral courses, as well as through the construction of teachers' morality, the penetration of classroom teaching, the edification of campus culture, the guidance of student affairs, and the training of social activities, thus presenting features such as the class nature of the content, the emotionality of the process, the diversity of the pathways, and the socialization of the method [2]. As for the educational work of French colleges and universities, it is directly intervened by the state and managed from the central government to the local government, emphasizing the "joint management" of the government, society, family and university in the process of youth education. In this regard,

Japanese colleges and universities emphasize "home-school cooperation" in the work of educating people, and set up special ethics department directors in colleges and universities to strengthen grade-to-grade contact, timely receive and share information, and strengthen the pertinence and effectiveness of educating work.

### ***2.2 Literature Review of Domestic Studies***

In the past 5 years, more than 40 articles in core journals such as Chinese Core Journals (Peking University) and CSSCI Chinese Social Science quotation index (Nanjing University) have conducted researches on the improvement of the moral values establishment and people cultivation ability of university counselors from different dimensions. Scholars have explored and studied the problems related to the curriculum construction of College Counselors in many aspects, discussed the necessity of improving the scientificity and professionalism of counselors' work through curriculum, and the need to enhance the effectiveness of education. Meanwhile, the causes that showed to be insufficient in the curriculum construction of the counselor team were also analyzed, the necessity of collaborative parenting between professional teachers and counselors in universities and colleges was proposed, and some countermeasures to enhance the force of two teams were given. First, in terms of the professional development path of counselors, Zhang Xiaoying and other conducted national-oriented empirical research and found that the newly appointed counselor team is not convinced of the job's promising results, believed that the emphasis of professional development in the counselor team was insufficient and the autonomy was limited [3]. Liu Decai summarized the professionalization and specialization path of the counselor team as management and education experts [4]. In response to the latter, Han Zhipeng and others proposed to use curriculum construction as a handle to create a specialized development platform for counselors [5]. On the other hand, a new way to build up the work curriculum education for counselors in transition was given by Jun Ling Wei et al. To sum up, taking the course construction as the carrier has become an effective path for the specialized and professional development of counselors [6]. Second, in terms of the current situation of the course construction of counselors, Zhu Dongxiang and others believe that counselors are easy to make the course design more close to the needs of students and enhance the appeal of moral education through

research and analysis [7]. Li Xiaoming found that in the actual moral education and mental health education, the separation of knowledge and practice is easy to occur, and there is no educational joint force between professional teachers and counselors [8]. And Gao Jiang Yong also believed that two teams of professional class teachers and counselors should be combined organically, so that they can work together in the same direction [9]. As for the specific measures, Ying Huiqiong and others believed that the obstacles of coordination should be overcome from the aspects of evaluation mechanism and platform construction [10]. Xiang Lu et al put forward the view of "promoting the reform of the curriculum", and divided the teaching of moral education and psychological courses into theoretical and practical teaching, advancing in a contingent, and enhancing the cooperation in education [11]. As for Feng Gang, he proposed five synergies between professional course teachers and counselors in the direction of education, content, method, management evaluation and scientific research, and supplemented the previous explanations on the content of the synergies, including the cooperation of the two teams in scientific research projects and the assessment and evaluation of the synergies between the two teams.

### **3. CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS OF COUNSELOR COURSE CONSTRUCTION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ELECTRONIC SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF CHINA**

In emphasizing the specialized and professionalized development of the counselor team, the implementation of a counselor "on the podium" system is an important approach for counselor education to become expert. The University of Electronic Science and technology of China built a multivariate platform for the course construction of counselors, which contained school level teaching platforms, such as "Enrollment Education for College Students" held by each college, and college level teaching platforms, such as "Employment Guidance for College Students" held by the school employment guidance center, and so on. Counselors can apply for classes on different platforms and prepare for classes individually or centrally according to their needs and expertise. In terms of the types of course construction, both general education and personalized education lay equal stress on,

including the core general courses that cultivate students' independent thinking ability and integrate knowledge of different disciplines; and the quality education elective courses that attach importance to the cultivation of Ideological and moral quality and ability and help students to develop in an all-round way; as well as the diversified personalized courses that cultivate students' innovation spirit and develop personalized differences. In addition, in terms of flexibility of course construction, the number of course candidates varies from 10 to 310, which means that there are not only interactive small-class teaching, but also large-class teaching focusing on the transfer of theoretical knowledge.

In order to fully interpret the situation and effect of counselors' involvement in curriculum construction, data on courses taught and evaluations by full-school counselors over a total of 5 semesters in 2017-2019 were collected and screened (120 data pieces in total). Each data includes the name of the course, the name of the teacher, the total score of the course evaluation, the grade of the course evaluation, the title of the teacher, the number of courses selected, the starting department, the nature of the course, the number of hours, etc.

#### ***3.1 Analysis of Teaching Personnel***

According to the teaching data of five semesters, there are 62 courses taught by counselors with the title of lecturer or above, of which 10 were excellent, accounting for 16.1%; 51 were good, accounting for 82.3%; only 1 was medium, accounting for 1.6%. Counselors with teaching assistant titles offered a total of 58 courses, 14 of which are excellent, accounting for 24.1%; 39 of which are good, accounting for 67.2%; and 5 of which are medium, accounting for 8.6%. It can be seen that courses conducted by counselors are less demanding for the teacher job title and that, without consideration of course capacity, those with a primary job title receive more evaluative excellence in their teaching than those with a middle professional title. However, by observing the overall teaching evaluation data, it can be found that only certain courses of teaching groups with intermediate titles are rated as medium, and the teaching quality is more stable. In addition, it was also found that 8 of the 120 courses were co-undertaken by 2 and more counselors, and the evaluation outcomes were all good or excellent, which to some extent reflected higher course maturity when multiple taught.

### 3.2 Course Nature Analysis

As described previously, the courses given by counselors were included in the core general knowledge course, basic general knowledge course, elective program for quality education, diversified education course, diversified personality course, and cultural management theory class. Aside from the conventional concept of the nature of the curriculum, the courses conducted by counselors focused on the following three aspects: The first aspect is mainly related to the adaptability education and career education for students to prepare for the future, including a total of 57 courses, such as "Entrance Education for Freshmen", "Academic Cognition and Vocational Planning", "Employment Guidance for College Students" and "Promotion and Expansion of College Students' Vocational Literacy". Some of these courses are offered on the platform of each school, fully combining the specialty characteristics of the schools and students' needs to construct the course content; others are organized by the employment guidance center of the school and are offered to the students of the whole school. The selection criteria of teaching counselors focus on full employment experience and enterprise visiting experience, and this part of the course is not centralized preparation, counselors have greater autonomy, and the students who choose courses have cross grade and cross specialty characteristics. The second aspect mainly focuses on the psychological health and emotional management of College students, including 41 courses such as "Mental Health and Innovative Ability" and "Emotional Management Ability", which are run by the University Mental Health Education Center (hereafter referred to as the center), mobilizing the strength of the mentorship team of each department and oriented to the whole school students, and were compulsory courses. The center provides basic training to the group of counselors, divides the preparation groups, and encourages free preparation and curriculum discussion within the group. The third is mainly concerned with the enhancement of undergraduate education and international vision, such as 22 courses including "Situation and Policy". Such courses are directly supervised by the school and counselors with certain theoretical basis are selected to join the subject team and centralized lesson preparation is carried out under the leadership of experts in the group. Of the above three course types, only four courses with less than 30 participants (small class teaching) and 54 courses with more than 100 participants (large class

teaching) were selected, which illustrates that teaching resources are still not abundant and that the interactive design of course contents is relatively lacking.

### 3.3 Statistical Analysis of Teaching Evaluation

"Digitizing" the collected data (such as the title of the teacher, etc.) and conducting correlation analysis and stepwise regression analysis to check whether the title of the instructor, the courses-starting unit, the nature of the course, the number of evaluators, etc. have significant influence on the results of teaching evaluation. The results show that the two factors of the course category and the number of students participating in teaching evaluation pass the test ( $P < 0.05$ ), and the regression equation as in

$$Y = -1.72X_1 - 0.013X_3 + 93.684$$

$X_1$  is the course category,  $X_3$  is the number of students participating in teaching evaluation.

The equation shows that there is no significant correlation between the teachers' professional titles and the teaching evaluation result; the teaching evaluation result of career planning courses is better than that of mental health courses and moral education courses; and with the increasing number of students participating in the course evaluation, i.e. the increase of curriculum capacity, the teaching evaluation results decrease. In response to the above results, a questionnaire survey and content interview are conducted for the students, and a survey is conducted among the counselor who are responsible for the course tasks, and the following causes were summarized: Firstly, depending on the professional nature of the counselor, the students are not sensitive to the title of the counselor and therefore do not show any obvious tendency in the course selection. As for the classroom effect, it is affected by many factors. The counselors with assistant title are relatively young and show higher enthusiasm in teaching, while the counselors with lecturer title have more experience data in teaching, which also has its advantages. Therefore, in the evaluation results, there is no obvious correlation between professional titles. Secondly, the courses with autonomous preparation by counselors have more flexibility, richness and practicability, and are popular among the students. While the courses of mental health and moral education are organized centrally by the university at different levels, the courses are theoretical, and

the forms of the courses are not rich enough to give full play to the counselors' teaching advantages.

#### **4. "EMPOWERING" EFFICIENCY PROMOTION MODEL OF COUNSELOR COURSE**

In view of the strong incorporation of work experience and closeness to the student discourse system exhibited by the current situation of the construction of the counselor courses, as well as the remaining disadvantages, such as the lack of theoretical support and the failure to systematically use diverse teaching means, this paper proposes the model for the efficiency improvement of the counselor courses, which will help the group of counselors "step onto the podium" and "stand well on the podium".

##### ***4.1 Formation of Multi-level Teaching Staff***

With title level coverage, administrative job level coverage and multifaceted coverage of the teaching field, a curriculum research team is formed to help the counselor group establish teaching confidence. Counselors should conduct timely seminars on teaching content within the team, draw experience from different fields and put forward problems to be solved, focus on whether there is separation of knowledge and action and insufficient integration in talent cultivation in the classroom, discuss the issue of enabling efficiency under the existing teaching framework, as well as the problem of knowledge-teaching capacity transformation under the background of external training and business team building, and the problems of collaborative education.

##### ***4.2 Teaching Method Empowerment Model***

To help the counselor group exert its teaching advantages, we should excavate the connotation and actual work of the counselor group and integrate the multi-channel educational and teaching resources that they are familiar with in their daily work. The mutual supported integrated teaching means from classroom, extracurricular, and to the web space is constructed to fully exert the advantages of rich educational teaching clusters of "second classroom", and to exert the advantages of information transfer of "third classroom", which is mediated by the network. In this way, the sporadic dispersion and monotonous and haphazard

problems can be overcome in the content of the traditional model of moral and mental health education, and the attractiveness and vitality of education can be enhanced. And by summarizing and refining, to move what is closest to the psychological needs of students, what is most needed for growth and development, and what is most able to help students improve their visual field landscape onto the podium, let the class no longer lack "breath".

##### ***4.3 Major Leading Empowerment Model***

The implementation of curriculum education directly refers to the tendency that values education is separated from knowledge education and teaching is separated from education, which is a precision strategy to realistically advance the cultivation of talents in colleges and universities. For the cultivation of talents in colleges and universities, major education and quality education complement each other and cannot be cut apart, so the two sides of educational subjects should strengthen communication, and only if they permeate and cooperate with each other can we finally achieve the fundamental purpose of education, that is, the comprehensive development of people. According to the characteristics of the work of counselors, on the one hand, the counselors of each department participate in the process of the construction of international platform, the construction of science creation platform, and the formulation of training programs related to the school, and have a certain understanding of the professional background and frontier disciplines of the school; on the other hand, the counselors will participate in school-wide work such as enterprise visits, new students' education, and further education and employment. They have a good understanding of the overall discipline construction and industry dynamics of the university. So the above two aspects make the counselors competent and conditional to incorporate professional leading in curriculum construction in a more vivid way.

Based on this, counselors and major course teachers collaborate to build a major leading empowerment model, which can better meet the students' cross-demand for major education and quality education. On the one hand, the "maps of major courses" can be drawn for students to guide them to think about their major, be brave to try and improve their professional identity; on the other hand, the "growth path map" will be drawn for students to help them analyze the distribution of

external resources and breakthrough points of ability that can be reached in different growth stages, so as to stimulate students' potential.

#### **4.4 Process Management Empowerment Model**

Instead of a unidirectional, single, and linear planar pattern, the educational mode of colleges and universities should be a bidirectional, multivariate stereological pattern. The close interaction of teachers and students, in which teachers and students should interact bidirectionally in the process of "output-input" education and being educated, forms a spiral of upward trend, which is an important driving force for the growth of teaching. To realistically guarantee the teaching quality of the counselors, it is better to set up a course supervision group of "research group — experts outside the group — student group" and a whole process modular listening account of "lesson preparation — lecture — supervision listening", to dynamically improve the course quality by dynamically tracking the course feedback, forming a process management model of "current feedback — immediate adjustment — dynamic iterative tracking". In this aspect, the new problems found are brought into the model construction at any time and iteration promotion are carried out, thus the situation of "a set of teaching plans" and "only output without feedback" will be fundamentally overcome, and the lag of after-class evaluation and teaching will be made up.

Taking team building as the cornerstone, teaching methods enabling model and major leading enabling model as the core, process management enabling model as the guarantee, it is necessary to jointly form a coach course "empowering" efficiency improvement model, and to inject lasting power into the university's talent training and "All-around Human Education".

### **5. CONCLUSION**

Through clarifying the role orientation of the counselor class in talent cultivation, the whole process quality of the counselor class is improved from course design to supervisory feedback, which makes the counselor prefer to stand on the podium and have the ability to stand well, thus further improving the energy efficiency of "empowering" the students. This is of practical significance to help the counselors to go to the "first class", and to

achieve development through the professional path of education and teaching, and to continuously increase the creative power of this group in the talent training work of colleges and universities.

### **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

Ling Quan is responsible for research design and wrote the manuscript, Xuhong Wu contributed to discussing the research plan, Cheng Luo analysed data, and Jianzhe Yang contributed to revising and editing.

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