

Evaluation of the Quality of Undergraduate Talent Training: Historical Evolution, Current Dilemmas, and Beyond Paths

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Abstract: Currently, China's higher education has entered the stage of popularization, and the quality evaluation of undergraduate talent cultivation is facing many development difficulties. Higher education should construct a talent cultivation quality evaluation paradigm, reshape the value of teaching quality evaluation, face the applicable range of quality standards, and construct an appropriate teaching quality cultural governance system, so as to promote the continuous improvement of the quality of undergraduate talent cultivation in China and continuously optimize higher education reform.

1. The Evolution of Undergraduate Education Quality Concept and Talent Training Quality Evaluation

With the continuous refinement and professionalization of social division of labor, whether higher education can effectively meet the diversity and complexity of social needs will become an important basis for evaluating the quality of talent cultivation [1]. Especially with the continuous transformation of university functions and forms, university education and teaching activities have become increasingly rich and complex. How to ensure teaching quality has become a key issue in the legitimacy of contemporary higher education.

In 1974, Martin Tro proposed the famous theory of stages of higher education development, which states that the development of higher education will go through three stages: elite, mass, and popularization. At the same time, the expansion of higher education scale will bring about changes in the quality of higher education. In the 1970s, countries such as the United States and Canada carried out higher education reforms, achieving a transition from a stage of mass education to a stage of universal education. Since the reform and opening up, with the continuous expansion of enrollment in higher education in China, China has gradually entered a stage of popularization of higher education.

Entering the stage of popularization, there has been a huge structural change in the scale of higher education structure, mainly manifested as: firstly, there is stronger diversity of students, the entry threshold is relatively lower, and the differences in academic starting points among students from different types of universities have widened; Secondly, the focus of the quality subject has shifted. In the context of fierce competition, the quality of education and talent cultivation is directly related to the survival and development of universities. Under the concept of "quality is the lifeline of students", the awareness of the quality of talent cultivation in universities has significantly strengthened; Thirdly, universities have weak abilities to improve the quality of talent cultivation and have not effectively established their own normalized quality monitoring system. In this context, the issues of educational equity and talent cultivation quality in the development of higher education have become more prominent.

In order to make up for the education and teaching quality crisis caused by the rapid expansion of scale in the short term, some countries and universities have formulated various teaching norms and quality standards and promoted a series of teaching reforms in universities through policy driven measures. In the evaluation of talent cultivation quality, there are issues such as lack of consensus on the system, single evaluation subjects, and inadequate evaluation systems. Therefore, one of the core contents of the teaching quality evaluation guarantee system is to study and construct scientific, appropriate, and diverse teaching quality guarantee standards, and effectively play the role of the "baton", "vane", and "booster" in talent cultivation quality evaluation.

2. The Current Dilemma in Evaluating the Quality of Undergraduate Talent Cultivation

The changes in the functions of university education and the complexity of talent cultivation determine that fixed standards are difficult to reflect objective needs. From the perspective of social management theory, standards are a common requirement for the universality of teaching, a bottom line requirement for teaching quality, and a requirement that any profession must meet. These common requirements, bottom line requirements, and accurate positioning of talent cultivation goals need to be determined based on the historical tradition, educational philosophy, and teaching laws of universities. Therefore, standard construction is the ships and bridges needed to cross the river [2], but blindly adhering to standards will in turn become a burden for quality improvement. Overall, there are mainly the following difficulties in evaluating the quality of undergraduate talent cultivation in China.

2.1 Teaching Quality Assurance Pursues External Formalization and Technicalization, Replacing Implicit Indicators with Explicit Indicators

Currently, the quality evaluation model for undergraduate talent cultivation lacks emotional evaluation among subjects in the teaching process, making it difficult to incorporate emotional and ethical investment in education and teaching into the evaluation criteria. Establishing what kind of internal substantive standards is an important issue of concern for every educator. Once the internal substantive standards are missing, that is, the quality evaluation standards are alienated, and students cannot obtain substantial and excellent classroom teaching.

The creativity of teaching depends on the dedication of teachers, and the evaluation of teacher investment cannot be based solely on explicit indicators such as attendance rate and attendance rate. The excellent research performance of teachers cannot replace the excellence of teaching. The classroom is the first battlefield for talent cultivation, and the improvement of talent cultivation quality based on classroom teaching must return to the university classroom [3]. The core value of classroom teaching is the closeness and attraction between teachers and students rooted in their

inner world. Therefore, we need to deepen the transformation of the classroom to better improve the quality of talent cultivation, provide precise teaching guidance centered on learners, and achieve a shift from standardized teaching to personalized teaching.

2.2 Hierarchical Construction of Teaching Quality Assurance: A "top-down" Administrative Evaluation Paradigm

In order to further improve the quality of undergraduate teaching and highlight the core position of undergraduate curriculum teaching in talent cultivation, many universities have carried out a series of teaching quality assurance system construction, including teaching supervision system, student evaluation system, and teaching work veto system. In the implementation process, the attendance rate of teachers and students has been greatly improved, but the significant improvement of these indicators has not actually benefited students. This indicates that the rationality of form cannot replace the inevitability of internal logic. On the one hand, excessive reliance on external standards and norms neglects the stimulation and maintenance of the internal initiative of the teaching subject, neglects individual differences in teaching, simplifies dynamic teaching activities into operational processes, not only widens the distance between teaching and learning, but also deviates from the original intention of educational quality evaluation. On the other hand, the lack of endogenous execution standards turns complex educational activities into planned and mechanized procedures, ruling out individual autonomy, reflection, and criticality [4].

3. The Beyond Path to the Quality Evaluation Dilemma of Undergraduate Talent Training

The transformation of the quality paradigm requires a shift in mindset. A lofty goal will generate a strong learning motivation, which in turn will generate a strong internal drive. How to establish students' sense of professional mission and social ideals is the primary problem that education reform needs to solve. In order to better overcome the current dilemma of evaluating the quality of undergraduate talent cultivation, the following paths can be mainly promoted [5].

3.1 Reshaping the Value of Teaching Quality Evaluation: Based on the Theory of Cultivating Every Student to Become the Best Self

Under the background of the "Double First Class" construction, leveraging the advantages of university discipline and professional resources, and pursuing excellence in education and teaching are the necessary and ultimate values for university education. From the perspective of educational equity, the responsibility and value of education lies in promoting the common progress of all students. Therefore, whether it is a university, a subject major, or every teacher in a university, they should establish this sense of mission and educational sentiment, and more help students who are in difficulties in learning, with "education" as the core goal, to reshape the value of teaching quality evaluation.

3.2 Theoretical basis for evaluating teaching quality: acknowledging the applicable range of quality standards

Teaching quality standards are an important guarantee for improving the quality of undergraduate talent cultivation. However, excessive reliance on quality standards can lead to endless formalism, requiring both standards and breaking away from standardized rigid thinking. Generally speaking, for young teachers who are new to the field of teaching, due to the lack of systematic training in the teaching process, this standardization has a strong guiding and normative

effect, such as the selection of teaching methods and the mandatory investment in teaching. If such constraints are lacking, it will inevitably lead to inefficiency and chaos in the teaching classroom. However, from the perspective of educational philosophy, the mandatory and normative nature of teaching evaluation standards should have a reasonable applicable range. The high-quality classroom teaching we strive for needs to be standardized, but the acquisition of quality at higher stages must go beyond norms and achieve a skilled or even free teaching state. And evaluation is a reflection on the evaluation of teaching and education. Good evaluations need to strengthen reflection and research, recognize the limitations of evaluation itself, in order to better play the role of standardization, guidance, reflection, and improvement in teaching evaluation.

3.3 Breaking the Practical Dilemma of Quality Evaluation: Constructing an Appropriate Governance System for Teaching Quality Culture

The quality culture of universities is the core driving force for the development of university connotations and also a core component of university culture. Promoting the development of the connotation of universities is an inherent requirement for the construction of first-class undergraduate programs. It is necessary to adhere to the principle of "student-centered" and build a quality culture of "self-discipline, self-examination, self-correction, self-awareness, and self-reflection". This is the internal support for universities to improve teaching quality.

Firstly, taking the comprehensive development of students as the core goal of teaching activities. It is required to prioritize students, take their interests and demands as the basis for establishing various teaching systems, take their development and progress as the starting point and foothold of all teaching work, grasp the laws of student learning, cognition and growth, respect their personalized development, and fully stimulate their development potential. When evaluating students' learning, it is important to focus on their self-awareness and self-evaluation, and actively encourage their participation in teaching quality management. Secondly, taking teacher participation in evaluation as an important measure to ensure teaching quality. Teacher participation in teaching evaluation can maximize the motivation of teachers, better integrate teaching evaluation with their teaching work, and activate their teaching enthusiasm. Once again, strengthen the evaluation of teaching attitude and emotional investment. Building a new model of teaching attitude, emphasizing the subjective participation of teachers, increasing the evaluation weight of teaching attitude and learning attitude, and increasing teaching attitude and emotional investment into an exponential form. Finally, make Total Quality Management and Continuous Improvement the core concepts of teaching evaluation. Adhere to comprehensive quality management, promote teacher self-responsibility and self-supervision, enhance the initiative and enthusiasm of participating in teaching quality engineering, internalize quality culture into the spiritual pursuit and professional mission of teachers, and transform it into specific behavior and conscious pursuit in teaching activities. Actively build a governance system for teaching quality culture, and effectively promote the effectiveness of teaching quality evaluation, further enhance the effectiveness and level of undergraduate talent training quality evaluation.

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If any, should be placed before the references section without numbering.

Data Availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Conflict of Interest

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