

# Research on the Cultivation of the Critical Thinking Ability of Postgraduates in Public Management

## -- Based on the Analysis of the Training Mode of Domestic and Foreign Universities

Ying Long<sup>1, 2, a</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Chongqing University Maintenance Stability Research Advisory Center; Chongqing, China

<sup>2</sup>School of Political and Public Administration, Southwest University of Political Science & Law, Chongqing, 401120, China

<sup>a</sup>915826628@qq.com

### Abstract

In recent years, critical thinking ability of public management professionals from a global perspective has gradually become one of the core competitiveness of postgraduate training. Through combing through the domestic and foreign models of critical thinking ability training, it is found that the research on critical thinking ability training is still inadequate, and the cultivation of critical thinking ability of postgraduates in public management discipline needs to be improved. Therefore, based on the actual situation, this article proposes three training strategies, including the transformation of training concepts, the innovation of training approaches, and the reconstruction of the curriculum system, in order to provide a new direction for the development of the critical thinking ability of public management postgraduate students.

### Keywords

Public management; Critical thinking; Postgraduate education.

### 1. Introduction

Xi Jinping emphasized that graduate education plays an important role in cultivating innovative talents, improving innovation capabilities, serving economic and social development, and promoting the modernization of the national governance system and governance capabilities. Party committees and governments at all levels should attach great importance to postgraduate education and promote postgraduate education to meet the needs of the development of the party and the country. With the deepening of my country's reform and opening up, the public management of our government is gradually transforming to a service-oriented government, and the modernization of the national governance system and governance capabilities has gradually increased the requirements for the ability of public management talents. [1] As one of the core competencies cultivated by postgraduates in public management, thinking ability can provide a source of innovative talents for service-oriented government. Foreign language circles are mostly translated as critical thinking, and fields such as pedagogy, psychology, and philosophy are also called critical thinking skills. Speculative or critical thinking refers to daily thinking that can grasp the essentials, is good at questioning and analyzing, rigorously inferring, witty and agile, clear and agile, which is the core part of innovative ability. [2] But at present, compared with the research on public management theory, the research on public management education, especially the comparative research on public management education models in

different countries, is relatively lacking. [3] Cultivation of thinking ability is particularly important for actively exploring the training mode of public management talents.

## 2. Cultivation of Critical Thinking Ability in Foreign Universities

### 2.1. The Situation of the Courses for Cultivating the Ability of Critical Thinking in Well-known Foreign Universities

Select a few typical universities from well-known foreign universities to sort out the information on the school's official website and the development of relevant thinking ability, see Table 1.

**Table 1** Overview of Cultivation of Critical Thinking Ability in Well-known Foreign University

School Name	Project Name	Project training method	Talent training goals
Indiana University	O'Neill Capstone Program	Under the supervision of teachers, coordinate with external client organizations to complete the project, which requires students with different backgrounds and skills to complete the project together in the form of collaborative learning	Solve the problems of interdisciplinary projects that combine public policy, policy analysis, management, and science and technology, and obtain the final experience, improve the ability of thinking, and solve interdisciplinary problems
University of Georgia	Master of Public Administration (MPA)	Emphasizes the cultivation of professional skills. Students receive training in analysis, communication and management skills, and incorporate critical thinking, fairness and decisiveness into the project.	Be able to be a fruitful public leader that involves all stakeholders and uses fact-based evidence to objectively make decisions and implement measures for the benefit of others
Australian National University	International Affairs	Learn how to critically analyze international affairs and foreign and defense policies through a wide selection of master's degree programs	Widely understand contemporary issues and challenges, analyze key policies, critically evaluate international affairs and provide solutions, and make independent judgments on key international issues
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)	UCLA Fiat Lux Program	Small-sized seminar-style classroom; extensive and rich elective courses; no assignments, no examinations, no grades, seminar-style teaching that discusses and shares while narrating	Let students understand problems from multi-disciplinary thinking and perspectives, transform their learning thinking styles, use critical thinking to insight into problems, think effectively, and solve them quickly

Through the above-mentioned setting of public management majors in colleges and universities, it can be found that the development of thinking ability is interspersed with the goals and processes of professional curriculum project setting, and the following characteristics are also concentrated. The first is to emphasize the flexibility of the curriculum, the free choice of students, and respect the students' individuality, interest and willingness; the second is to

emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of the course content, encourage students to choose multiple subjects, solve problems from an interdisciplinary international perspective, and improve critical ability; third, to ensure that the curriculum system is perfect and independent, and the multiple levels of the teaching system give the school its unique advantages; fourth, to integrate critical thinking into the curriculum system and daily teaching as a value concept. Generally speaking, foreign universities generally attach importance to the cultivation of speculative ability, integrate speculative thinking into the entire curriculum system, and provide a variety of elective courses to improve students' vision of obtaining international academic foreword information, and cultivate the information acuity and information acuity of professional talents. International thinking ability, encourages an interdisciplinary-based international vision to critically propose independent opinions and resolve complex conflicts across fields.

## 2.2. Analysis of Related Textbooks for the Cultivation of Critical Thinking Ability Abroad

Overseas Excellent Textbook Reference Database (TBRef) is a commonly used textbook reference database in domestic university libraries. It collects more than 200,000 foreign excellent foreign textbooks, covering 13 university disciplines, and more than 400 foreign universities. Colleges. TBRef retrieved 407 textbooks with the subject heading "Critical Thinking" from 2000 to 2021. The publishing houses are mainly based in the United States and the United Kingdom. Among them, 54 books are published by Routledge in the United Kingdom and 37 books are published by Pearson Publishing in the United States. Table 2 lists 10 textbooks of classic speculative ability.

**Table 2** Classic Foreign Critical Thinking Training Textbooks in the TBRef Database

Numble	Textbook name	Publication time	Publishing house
1	The Critical Advantage	2017	Harvard Education Press (America)
2	Critical Thinking	2017	Cambridge University Press (England)
3	Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking	2011	Pearson (America)
4	Critical Reading Critical Thinking: Focusing on Contemporary Issues	2011	Longman (Hong Kong, China)
5	Critical Thinking	2016	McGraw-Hill Education (America)
6	The Power of Critical Thinking	2018	Oxford University Press (England)
7	Think Smarter: Critical Thinking to Improve Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Skills	2014	Wiley (America)
8	Study and Critical Thinking Skills in College	2010	Pearson (America)
9	Knowledge, Control and Critical Thinking in Singapore	2017	Routledge (England)
10	Teaching for Critical Thinking: Tools and Techniques to Help Students Question Their Assumptions	2011	Jossey-Bass (America)

Textbooks, as the foundation of speculative ability training activities, can be used as self-study materials apart from teachers and professors, helping students consolidate important content and knowledge points, and provide a theoretical basis for the subsequent development of speculative skills, and play an important role in teaching activities. In the field of talent training in foreign universities, especially in the United States, the cultivation of critical thinking ability has been integrated into the core educational philosophy of teaching. Based on the different concepts of philosophers, educators, and psychologists, a large number of different styles of critical thinking textbooks have been formed, and the types of textbooks are diverse and rich. The reference of foreign speculative teaching materials to our country is that it can broaden the types of Chinese speculative training materials and improve the quality and diversity of classic teaching materials. Through the analysis, learning, and sorting of foreign textbooks, the essence of the cultivation of speculative ability in foreign countries can be summarized, combined with the actual development of our country, focusing on the development and compilation of classic speculative ability training textbooks suitable for national conditions.

### 3. Cultivation of critical thinking ability in domestic Universities

Select several typical colleges and universities from domestic key colleges, and sort out the professional training situation of relevant projects released by the school's official website information, see Table 3.

The current public management graduate training in my country focuses on the study of theoretical and basic knowledge, combines a variety of teaching methods, uses research-based, practical, and dialectical teaching methods, and develops projects with foreign universities to expand students' international vision and enhance professional quality, improve critical thinking ability, and focus on using critical thinking to discover, analyze, and solve various practical problems in the professional field. Generally speaking, although the development of domestic critical thinking habits and the cultivation of critical thinking ability have attracted the attention of individual universities, there is still room for improvement in curriculum coverage, curriculum system, and teaching methods, and there are insufficient interdisciplinary awareness and international thinking. The cultivation of thinking ability has not penetrated into the public management majors of individual universities, and the education system of public management graduate students needs to be further improved.

In addition, the teaching materials for the cultivation of critical thinking ability in our country mainly appear in the fields of English majors in colleges and universities, logic, and philosophy. Graduate education combines cross-cultural communication with the cultivation of speculative ability for teaching, and the combined teaching materials mainly appear in the form of elective courses. At this stage, most of the textbooks in the field of critical thinking in China are translations of foreign books. There are few localized classic textbooks, and they mainly focus on logical argumentation and reasoning, and rarely involve more extensive and more important thinking training. There are still misunderstandings and stereotypes of thinking, teaching materials lack cases that can help students understand basic concepts, and there are few teaching materials that combine practice to cultivate the ability of thinking.

**Table 3** Overview of the Project Construction of Critical Thinking Ability in Well-known Universities in China

School Name	Project Name	Project training method	Talent training goals
Tsinghua University	Master of Public Policy for Sustainable Development Goals (MPP-SDG)	Establish professional courses covering multiple SDGs fields, give full play to the advantages of the international joint training of both parties, integrate the advantages of educational resources of both parties, and help students build a global vision of sustainable development	Enhance the professionalism and practical ability of MPA graduate students, open up a more comprehensive international perspective, and comprehensively enhance students' concepts, knowledge and skills in critical analysis and solving problems related to sustainable development
Fudan University	LSE-Fudan Double Master's in International Social and Public Policy	After the theoretical introduction, the curriculum is composed of core courses, basic courses, and elective courses. It provides guidance and practical exercises on key skills: effective reading, academic writing, and critical thinking.	Understand international society and public policies, be familiar with different theories and frameworks, and enable them to critically evaluate and explain current issues and issues of great significance to social policy scholars and practitioners from a critical perspective
Beijing University	Master Program in Public Policy (MPP)	Classroom teaching, while mastering the basic theories and professional knowledge of the subject, combined with various teaching methods such as internship investigations, case discussions, simulation training, etc.	Broaden knowledge and improve international horizons, cultivate leadership, critical analysis and solving practical problems, and good communication skills
Renmin University of China	Master of Urban Governance	Make full use of existing academic resources, highlight the characteristics of joint training, and adopt a dual-mentor guidance method to promote dialogue and understanding of urban issues between China and the world	Cultivate interdisciplinary urban planning and management talents with international vision, high academic literacy, and strong practical ability, deepen students' familiarity and recognition with Chinese politics, economy, society and culture, and improve cross-cultural communication and thinking skills
City University of Hong Kong	Master of Arts in Public Policy and Management	The core curriculum lays a solid foundation for public policy and management expertise. In response to the needs of specialization, learn in designated courses, group and carry out a capstone project to carry out research	Interpret, compare and critically evaluate various values, moral principles and cultural traditions that affect the decision-making process and provide services to the community, solve problems creatively, and contribute to the development of public policies

## 4. Conclusion

The results of this study show that: Xi Jinping emphasized that postgraduate education should further promote the adjustment of disciplines, improve the level of tutors, improve the talent training system, accelerate the training of high-level talents urgently needed by the country, and make contributions to the persistence and development of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the realization of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Postgraduate education is the foundation for building an innovative country, and it occupies a higher position in the education system, so it must be given sufficient attention. As one of the core competences for cultivating the innovation ability of postgraduates majoring in public management, international critical thinking ability has been included in the "Outline of the National Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)" (Draft for Comment) on the "Innovative Talent Cultivation Model". Among the specific requirements. [4] At present, our country is still in its infancy for the cultivation of postgraduates' critical thinking ability, and there is still a lack of perfect implementation rules for the cultivation of postgraduates' critical thinking ability, especially in public management. It is necessary to learn from foreign teaching models and at the same time explore the localized training path suitable for the characteristics of the subject in combination with the actual situation in China. This requires scholars, teachers, and students to participate in multiple parties and continue to work together for a long time.

(1) Change the concept of cultivation, cater to the trend of internationalization, and focus on the cultivation of critical thinking

In terms of training concepts, we should change our thinking according to the development trend of public management disciplines, and focus on cultivating speculative ability and international vision. Cultivate students to choose their own goals from the bottom up to cater to the trend of internationalization, and to integrate speculative thinking into the solution of practical problems. Innovate talent training models and education methods, strengthen student thinking training, build a high-level international faculty team, and expand the scale of international exchanges. [5] The focus of cultivating ideas should not be limited to cultivating talents with strong professional theoretical knowledge, but also need to pay attention to cultivating international vision, interdisciplinary awareness, independent analysis, and problem solving.

(2) Innovate training methods to meet the needs of internationalization, and pay attention to the training of critical thinking ability

Talent training methods and approaches combine systemicity and integrity, explore teaching methods and methods suitable for public management disciplines, and develop students' potential for independent learning. Integrate different scientific and effective training methods and paths to promote graduate students to participate in activities, improve students' thinking vitality, participate in international affairs with a proactive attitude, and meet the international needs for public management talents. The training method is guided by internationalization, attaches importance to the exercise of postgraduates' critical thinking ability, and explores and optimizes the various components of the public management graduate education system. At the same time, teaching training methods should fully absorb modern informatization teaching methods, combining online teaching with offline teaching, and combining multimedia audio-visual to cultivate students' thinking.

(3) Rebuild the curriculum system, integrate with the international model, and attach importance to the formation of speculative consciousness

Pay attention to the diversity and level of the curriculum training system, create a curriculum system that is in line with international standards, combine subject characteristics, integrate professional knowledge and subject resources to encourage students to participate in academic

activities, and build "theory + practice" "in-school training + off-campus internship" The three-dimensional professional teaching system of "skills competition + applied research" enables the balanced development of students' knowledge, skills, and qualities. [6] Focus on cultivating students' problem-solving skills, improving their critical thinking skills, and promoting students to choose their own learning. Integrate the curriculum system with internationalization, introduce international courses, integrate domestic and foreign high-quality teaching models, strengthen international academic exchanges, and cultivate public management graduate students with an awareness of international participation.

## Acknowledgments

This article is the phased results of Chongqing Graduate Education and Teaching Reform Research Project "Research and Practice on the Internationalization of Public Management Postgraduates' Thinking Ability Training Model" (Project number: yjg203046); Chongqing University Maintenance Stability Research Advisory Center 2020 Project "Chongqing Universities Response Research on the Mode of Public Health Emergencies-Taking the prevention and control of the COVID-19 as an example" (project number: CQGXWWZZZX2020-Yjs7)

## References

- [1] Qin Zhengwei. The construction and application of a diversified talent training model for public management majors. *Journal of Shandong University of Science and Technology (Social Science Edition)*, 2015, 17(04), p.100-104+106. (In Chinese)
- [2] Wang Yumin. Research on Cultivation Strategies of Thinking Ability from the Perspective of Cross-cultural Communication. *Literary Education (Part 1)*, 2014(06), p.120-121. (In Chinese)
- [3] Guo Hongling, Geoff Gallop. Comparative Analysis of Public Management Education in China and Foreign Countries. *Public Management Review*, 2012, 13(02), p.127-138. (In Chinese)
- [4] Wu Li. Research on the Cultivation of Thinking Ability of Postgraduates Majoring in Foreign Languages in Colleges and Universities. *Heilongjiang Education (Theory and Practice)*, 2019(Z2), p.23-25. (In Chinese)
- [5] Li Mingqiu. Explore the training model of innovative foreign language talents in the internationalization of higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Research*, 2014, 37(02), p.116-120. (In Chinese)
- [6] Zhang Jie. Research on the Reform of Applied Talents Training Mode in Local Colleges and Universities from the Perspective of Integration of Production and Education. *Journal of Changchun Institute of Education*, 2021, 37(02), p.34-40. (In Chinese)