

# Research on the cultivation of higher order thinking ability of undergraduates majoring in tourism management in local universities under the background of new liberal arts

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**Abstract:** *With the rapid development of tourism, higher requirements are put forward to the abilities and professional qualities of tourism undergraduates. Tourism enterprises are in urgent need of a group of excellent new tourism talents with creative thinking ability and critical thinking ability to meet the requirements of rapid development and increasingly intense competition. Therefore, local universities need to improve the high-level thinking ability of tourism management undergraduates to meet the needs of social development. Under the background of the new liberal arts, local colleges and universities need to build a path for the cultivation of students' high-level thinking ability, start with top-level design, condition guarantee, reward mechanism, etc., and cultivate innovative tourism talents with diversified knowledge and comprehensive quality in the new era, so as to promote the high-quality development of tourism education.*

**Keywords:** *Tourism management; new liberal arts; higher order thinking ability*

## 1. Introduction

According to the Tourism Competitiveness Report released by the World Economic Forum in 2022, the global competitiveness ranking of China's tourism industry has risen to 12th in the world. With the improvement of the domestic epidemic situation, the tourism market has shown a positive recovery trend. In the May Day holiday in 2023, the total number of domestic tourism trips was 274 million, an increase of 70.83%. Domestic tourism revenue reached 148.056 billion yuan, up 128.90% year-on-year. With the rapid development of tourism, higher requirements are put forward to the abilities and professional qualities of tourism undergraduates. Tourism enterprises are in urgent need of a group of excellent new tourism talents with creative thinking ability and critical thinking ability to meet the requirements of rapid development and increasingly intense competition. In recent years, under the background of vigorously promoting the construction of new liberal arts, college tourism education has also entered a new stage of development. However, the cultivation of high-level thinking ability of tourism management majors obviously lags behind the development of tourism industry, and the advantages of colleges and universities in the cultivation of high-level thinking ability have not been brought into play. In particular, the recognition degree and employment rate of tourism management students in local colleges and universities are low, and the occupational characteristics are unclear. It is difficult for undergraduate tourism students to meet the needs of social development. There exists a serious contradiction between the cultivation of undergraduate tourism students and the demand of undergraduate tourism students in local universities. Therefore, improving students' high-level thinking ability, cultivating innovative tourism talents with diversified knowledge and comprehensive quality in the new era, and promoting the high-quality development of tourism education have become urgent problems to be solved.

## 2. Domestic and foreign related research academic history and research trends

The training and development of students' higher order thinking ability has become the focus of educational activities in the world, but so far, the definition and connotation of higher order thinking have not been unanimously defined in the academic field. The term "higher-order thinking" originated from the classification of educational goals by American educator Bloom, who subdivided the human

thinking process into six goals: memory, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation according to the complexity of human cognition. Among them, memory, understanding and application are low-order thinking, and analysis, evaluation and creation are high-order thinking. In terms of understanding, higher-order thinking is much more complex than lower-order thinking. Barak believes that the internal relationship of higher order thinking is complex and changeable, and there is no unified solution, which is more likely to produce other thinking that matches multiple conditions [1]. Ennis further explained higher-order thinking from the perspective of standards: it can use abstract thinking structures, synthesize information into an organic whole, and apply reasonable logic and judgment criteria. David Perkins, professor of psychology at Harvard University, believes that higher-order thinking can be cultivated and trained with the support of teaching conditions. The United States, Britain and Japan embody this point in the curriculum and teaching mode of tourism management major. Other study investigated and found in the Characteristics and Enlightenment of Tourism Management Vocational Education in the UK that the main characteristics of tourism education in the UK are close combination of theory and practice, great emphasis on vocational ability and skills, multiple cases of cooperation between universities and enterprises, and emphasis on cultivating tourism undergraduates' open thinking in the cultivation of high-level thinking in tourism.

Domestic research on higher-order thinking originated in the early 21st century. Compared with foreign research, domestic research on higher-order thinking started relatively late. Zhong Zhixian believes that higher-order thinking is a comprehensive ability that occurs at a higher level of cognition [2]. It is the ability to go beyond the established information, the ability to solve problems, the metacognitive ability and the ability to evaluate, the ability to be an autonomous learner, and the ability to make reasonable judgments or decisions. Therefore, higher-order thinking ability mainly consists of the following four abilities: problem solving ability, decision-making thinking ability, critical thinking ability, creative thinking ability. Wang Maohua systematically analyzed the connotation of higher-order thinking from the perspectives of philosophy, psychology and pedagogy, constructed the structure of higher-order thinking, and determined that higher-order thinking is mainly composed of thinking ability and thinking tendency [3]. Wang Jingling et al. clarified the connotation and positioning of scientific higher-order thinking and built a system structure model of scientific higher-order thinking [4]. Higher-order thinking ability is not spontaneous, it is born from confusion and doubt. The generation of higher-order thinking is the process of finding problems, raising problems and then solving problems, so problems are the mother of higher-order thinking ability. Hu Jun et al. believe that one of the important ways to develop students' higher-order thinking and implement core literacy is to cultivate students' ability to raise questions. Individuals exchange information on acquired experience and the existing environment, then initiate cognitive operations, and then generate divergent thinking to find and propose problems and then solve them. This process is very creative.

To sum up, higher-order thinking ability consists of four elements: problem-solving ability, decision-making thinking ability, creative thinking ability and critical thinking ability. Higher-order thinking ability refers to the ability to analyze and reorganize information, discover and propose problems to solve problems, and finally make comprehensive and creative evaluation of the aforementioned series of processes.

In 2018, the Ministry of Education proposed to comprehensively promote the construction of new engineering, new medicine, new agriculture, and new liberal arts. Since then, more academic achievements have been made on the connotation of new liberal arts construction, personnel training mode, and professional Settings. Chen Fan and He Jun believe that the construction of new liberal arts should not only cross disciplines, but also seek incremental construction in knowledge production. Long Baoxin proposed from a humanistic perspective that the new liberal arts should not only couple the disciplinary system, but also consolidate the humanistic soul [5].

Qu Weiguo and Chen Liufang propose that the new liberal arts is a comprehensive and systematic reform of humanities teaching in the new era [6]. It can be seen that the foundation of the construction of the new liberal arts is interdisciplinary, and the knowledge structure and connotation of the liberal arts should be reconstructed and enhanced. On the one hand, the new liberal arts education concept can cultivate high-level and high-quality talents in all aspects and multiple dimensions, on the other hand, it is conducive to the inheritance of our traditional culture and humanistic spirit. In the subordinate discipline system of the traditional liberal arts, the detailed specialty setting can help students to deeply learn professional knowledge and master work skills, and has obvious industry-oriented, which meets the requirements of The Times for college students in China and shorts the talent training cycle.

The goal of the construction of the new liberal arts is to cultivate applied compound liberal arts talents who meet the requirements of the new era. Under the background of new liberal arts, many

scholars have conducted research on the teaching of tourism management. As a pioneer in the construction of new liberal arts, the innovative development of China's tourism management compound talent training model has become a research hotspot. Huang Zhenfang et al. used questionnaire survey and potential conflict index to discuss the existing problems and causes in the undergraduate course teaching of tourism management majors under the background of new liberal arts, and proposed the basic standards and main paths for the construction of "golden course" [7]. Ren Xinyu studied the reform of talent training mode for tourism management professionals under the background of new liberal arts, and built a "professional-occupation-industry" non-functional talent training mode for tourism management [8]. In addition, some scholars take specific courses as examples to discuss the curriculum reform of tourism management majors. Under the background of new liberal arts, the cultivation of diversified applied tourism talents is more in line with the requirements of tourism discipline construction in the era of rapid development. Compared with the traditional liberal arts, the service and management nature of tourism requires it to seek development based on itself, cultivate students' higher-order thinking, and actively explore and combine the background of The Times to find opportunities for interdisciplinary integration.

### 3. Analysis of problems in practice teaching of tourism management speciality

In the context of the new liberal arts, to improve the quality and ability of tourism management professionals, it is necessary to build a sound practice teaching system and curriculum for tourism management. However, in many colleges and universities in our country, there is a lack of practice teaching links, which cannot improve students' practical ability well and cannot integrate with social and economic development. In view of this phenomenon, this paper explores a series of problems existing in the teaching of this major and actively discusses the construction of new liberal arts and the development of tourism, seeking the path and countermeasures of the practical teaching reform of this major. At present, the problems existing in the practice teaching of tourism management speciality include the following aspects:

#### (1) The training base inside and outside the school is not reasonably equipped

The training base is an important condition for practical teaching. Only the well-equipped and fully functional training base can ensure that students have a good practice environment and achieve a high employment rate after graduation

At the same time, the training base is also required to have a certain degree of comprehensiveness and professionalism, and can use the equipment and functions of the tourism industry to meet the teaching needs, and provide students with a practice that can be operated and trained

The training base should use the platform to enhance students' practical understanding, so as to cultivate practical talents to meet the needs of market economy. Practice teaching is an important part of the school teaching system. We should focus on the training objectives of the school and cultivate compound talents who combine practical ability and theoretical knowledge.

#### (2) Ignoring the construction of practical teaching structure

The teaching system of some universities emphasizes theoretical learning and neglects practical teaching, which leads to the lack of practical ability of students. At present, tourism management teachers in some local colleges and universities pay too much attention to the teaching of theoretical knowledge, ignoring the cultivation of students' practical operation ability. Moreover, due to the unscientific setting of practical teaching curriculum system, students cannot apply theoretical knowledge to practice well. As students majoring in tourism management, the courses they learn involve many aspects and are highly applicable. Most of them need to have practical operation ability rather than learning classroom content. At present, some colleges and universities do not pay attention to training students' practical skills, resulting in unreasonable curriculum structure, most of which are based on classroom teaching and lack of practical teaching combining theory with practice. Although some colleges and universities have certain practical teaching, the proportion is not high, and the teaching method is relatively backward.

#### (3) Lack of innovation in practical teaching

At present, the practical courses in colleges and universities are mostly basic skills training, lacking certain innovation, and the teaching content is not updated in a timely manner, which is difficult to match the contemporary tourism development. In addition, tourism management is highly professional,

and it is difficult to expand courses and ideas from other aspects, thus hindering students' innovative thinking. Only by constantly developing new thinking activities, stimulating students' innovative thinking in practice teaching, and raising their consciousness to a new height, can we better cultivate excellent innovative talents in tourism management.

(4) Unreasonable design of practical teaching links

First, the curriculum is not consistent. At present, some universities only offer professional basic courses and public courses in the first two years of college, rarely involving the corresponding practical courses, and concentrated practice in the form of post internship in the fourth year of junior college. Due to the lack of professional practice guidance from teachers in the early stage of teaching, students lack experience in the practice process, it is inevitable that they will not handle various problems well, and psychological pressure will increase sharply, resulting in some students wanting to change careers before graduation. Second, the comprehensive curriculum is not strong, the overall development of students is limited. In some schools, the practice curriculum arrangement is unreasonable. For example, they set up room service, catering service, tea art and other single subject practical training courses for students, but ignore the comprehensive practice course. Students only carried out unilateral learning, did not get a comprehensive exercise, which is not conducive to the formation of systematic practical ability.

(5) Insufficient level of practical teaching

Insufficient practical teaching level is the key reason for the poor teaching effect in colleges and universities. In the construction and development of colleges and universities, the teaching level will be backward due to various reasons, such as the lack of education funds in some colleges and universities, the improper use of funds and so on. Some schools have not built or improved supporting training bases inside and outside the school, and do not arrange students to go out to practice, to a certain extent, dampened the enthusiasm of students to practice. In terms of teachers, there is a lack of teachers with rich practical experience; In terms of teaching, the practical teaching system is not perfect, the teaching method lags behind, the social practice lacks effective organization and guidance, and the training goal is not clear enough. In terms of conditions, the training base is not well equipped, the practice base can not be rationally utilized, and even the base operation and management standards are lacking, which is difficult to play its due value. At the same time, the practical teaching assessment and evaluation system of tourism management majors in some universities is unscientific. Local universities mainly adopt the teaching assessment and evaluation system based on the academic performance of theoretical courses, and only pay attention to the improvement of scientific and cultural knowledge, ignoring the development of practical ability. Few schools have formulated comprehensive assessment standards including practical teaching assessment methods. Assessment and evaluation can make teachers understand students' knowledge, but the assessment system that only focuses on the academic performance of theoretical courses will cause one-sided development of students and is not conducive to the training of high-quality tourism management talents. The lack of practical ability leads to the low learning enthusiasm of some students, which is not conducive to the training of tourism talents and the rapid development of tourism industry in our country.

#### **4. Construction of high order thinking ability training path for undergraduates majoring in tourism management**

Before class, in order to effectively integrate online learning with offline class, three types of content are designed for online self-study by students. According to the teaching goals, low-order goals and repetitive content are given to students for online self-study; According to the classroom teaching content, questions are raised before class. Students submit solutions through pre-class activities such as consulting materials and group discussions. Student representatives report and teachers comment during class. Combine classroom content to study.

The classroom teaching combines the "BOPPPS+PAD" model, and designs six teaching links: "curriculum introduction - peer teaching - positive and negative debate - scenario simulation - knowledge expansion - independent induction". The team created a lot of original cases that are not available in traditional textbooks, taking travel and current affairs news as content, and introducing new lessons with online videos as the carrier. In "peer teaching", students first think independently, answer independently, and then organize student peer teaching. In the "pros and cons debate" session, the pros and cons debate on tourism-related issues such as "travel fast and travel slow". In the "knowledge development" link, teachers will spread and transfer knowledge points, introduce the frontier trends of

disciplines, as well as the achievements in the fields of national history, culture, science and technology related to knowledge points, and cultivate students' spirit of scientific research, craftsman spirit, family and country feelings and mission responsibility. In the "independent induction" link, students will make a summary, and other students will supplement the explanation, so as to cultivate students' advanced ability of independent induction.

After class advanced learning: the platform question bank homework includes choice, fill in the blank, judgment questions, students punch in the homework to consolidate basic knowledge; Extracurricular reading is to push the literature related to students and their major, adhere to the output oriented; The experimental design should be published on the public account of the course in groups; Participating in competitions such as Red tourism route design is a report of the combination of scientific research ability and professional knowledge, and exercises students' ability to express, cooperate and solve practical problems.

## 5. Conclusions

We set up a teaching mode of "ideological and political guidance, problem-driven, and integration of competition and innovation". By a series of activities before, during and after class, students' roles transform from passive receivers to participants and builders. The infusion-style classroom will be transformed into a conversational and speculative classroom, especially the "positive and negative debate" and "peer teaching" in the classroom, that breaking the boring classroom with traditional teaching methods. It also solves the problem that the large class system is not suitable for group discussion. After-school tasks effectively extend classroom learning to extra-curricular activities, combine with students' majors, and focus on the advancement of tasks. This model fully embodies the concept of "student-centered", arouses the enthusiasm of students to participate in learning, improves the movement between teachers and students, improves the learning efficiency of students, and gradually cultivates the quality and ability of students. It embodies the high order, innovation and challenge of teaching design.

Original many cases and sample backgrounds that are not found in traditional textbooks. The content of the course is no longer confined to the accumulation of "flat" knowledge such as concepts and definitions, but the "three-dimensional" knowledge rooted in culture and society and combined with majors. We enrich online and offline learning resources in the form of network resources that are more acceptable to students, and publish them on the public account to stimulate students' interest in learning. At the same time, we will earnestly build ideological and political classes, and integrate ideological and political elements like spring breeze and rain, so as to realize the two-way linkage of knowledge transmission and ideological education.

The blended teaching brings more time and space for stratified teaching. Online learning hours, clinics are opened for backward students, and small class teaching is carried out to help students with "learning difficulties". Students participate in competitions and college student entrepreneurship projects, which provided a stage for "excellent students" to show, and exercised advanced ability. At the same time, we will give full play to the advantages of the integration of science and education in the school, invite different professional teachers to carry out the "one lesson, multiple teachers" activity, and bring students an academic feast of the cross-integration of tourism geography knowledge and other knowledge.

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