



# On Constructing an “Orientation-participatory” Graduates’ Independent-ability Cultivation System

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## To cite this article:

Sujuan Liu. On Constructing an “Orientation-participatory” Graduates’ Independent-ability Cultivation System. *American Journal of Education and Information Technology*. Vol. 5, No. 1, 2021, pp. 7-12. doi: 10.11648/j.ajeit.20210501.12

**Received:** January 24, 2021; **Accepted:** February 1, 2021; **Published:** February 23, 2021

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**Abstract:** The complexity of graduates’ family background, age, social experience and education motivation, combined with their distinctive characteristics, had brought great challenges to the graduate ideological and political education. It is difficult to influence different kind of graduates with the same methods. Only enhancing students’ independent-ability can probably solve this problem. Graduates’ independent-ability gives students a chance to full play their role so as to exploit their self-education and self-accomplishment capability. It includes five aspects, which are spontaneous struggle consciousness, independent innovation spirit, independent problem-solving ability, self-adjustment ability and independent choice-making ability. But the survey finds various problems existing in cultivation of graduates’ independent-ability restrict further development of graduates and impact a great bad influence on education. Therefore, how to strengthen their independent-ability is critical in improving high-level education quality. The current study needs to make a breakthrough. “Orientation-participatory” system proposes a new way of cultivating graduates. Based on the principles of *people-oriented*, *ability-focused*, *guidance-strengthened* and *broad participation*, “Orientation-participatory” graduates’ independent-ability cultivation system gives full play to the external factor *orientation* and the internal factor *participatory*, and construct a graduate education management system which covers four latitudes, namely education content, education method, education subject and education environment, and includes many levels such as management regulation, independent platform and campus culture, and so on. “Orientation-participatory” system is expected to inspire the graduates’ independent-ability cultivation and shed some light on further study.

**Keywords:** Graduates’ Independent-ability, Orientation, Participatory, System

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## 1. Introduction

As the implementation of invigorating the country through science and education, the recent years have witnessed the vigorous development of high-level education in china, represented by the expansion of graduate students’ enrollment and the diversification of the cultivating type. Meanwhile, the complexity of graduates’ family background, age, social experience and education motivation, combined with their distinctive characteristics, namely relative stable values, strong independence sense, weak collective spirit and serious utilitarian tendency, have brought great challenges to the graduate ideological and political education [1], which is now caught in dilemma – it is difficult to carry out meaningful educational activities or persuade graduates to realize their mistakes from insides. According to such characteristics, one available way in breaking current plight is to strengthen the construction of graduates’ core competency –

independent-ability, give students a chance to full play their role so as to exploit their self-education and self-accomplishment capability. What’s more, the mentioned method is also a wise policy to improve the quality of graduate education in the long run. Ying Liu has testified that Independent mode can improve Graduate Students’ Innovative Ability.[6] Hengye Li has tried to Construct the Cultivation System of Graduate Students’ Innovation Ability.[7] Yuxiao He has explored to improve Postgraduates’ Practical Ability by participating. [15] All the research laid the foundation for my research.

## 2. Concepts of Graduates’ Independent-ability

Graduates’ independent-ability means that postgraduates acquire the ability of self-education and self-accomplishment

for the reason of their own spirit and strength instead of supervision of other people. It includes five aspects, which are spontaneous struggle consciousness, independent innovation spirit, independent problem-solving ability, self-adjustment ability and independent choice-making ability.

- A. Spontaneous struggle consciousness reflects positive outlook of graduates and refers that graduate students set a clear aim, make a viable plan and carry it out effectively, and work hard to achieve the target. The spirit of struggle is "a requirement of the times for postgraduates, a high-level talent group" [2].
- B. Independent innovation spirit means graduates should be good at discovering new problems, putting forward new ways and ideas to solve the problem in the light of the acquired knowledge. It can be specialized as the strong sense of innovation, better scientific literacy and creative ability, down-to-earth determination, hard-working and aggressive spirit with no self-satisfied virtue [3].
- C. Independent problem-solving ability is the capability of overcoming the challenges by graduates themselves. When encountering problems, they should try their best to solve the problem through a variety of channels, and create various conditions for the successful resolution of the problem. Postgraduate training, especially postgraduate training in applied disciplines, "is not limited to mastering theoretical knowledge and frontier knowledge, but also requiring students to cultivate practical skills" [4].
- D. Self-adjustment ability is that graduates master some physiological and psychological knowledge, and can conduct self-adjustment programs, cure the unhealthy conditions in body or mind to healthy status through consulting literature or doctor. "The solution of postgraduate mental health problems not only depends on the efforts of counselors and mental health educators, but also requires the active adjustment of postgraduates themselves" [5].
- E. Independent choice-making ability refers that graduates are able to make correct choice in their life. They should distinguish between right and wrong, and prioritize tasks when in the face of complex network information, social issues and political affairs. Meanwhile, when meet the choice of lover, career or research field, they should well control and identify their own, hold correct outlook on life, values and worldview as well.

### 3. Current Situation in Graduates' Independent-ability Cultivation

Graduates' independent-ability cultivation is the implement of ability as well as the embodiment of graduates' self-education. "Independent scientific research is the highest form of research and innovation for graduate students" [6]. It is important to analyze the existing problem and then solve the shortcomings effectively.

#### 3.1. Various Problems in Graduates' Independent-ability Cultivation

The ultimate aim of ideological and political education is to enhance their self-education ability. However, the survey finds different kinds of problems existing in graduates' independent-ability cultivation.

##### 3.1.1. Problems in Spontaneous Struggle Consciousness

Various problems exist in Graduates' spontaneous struggle consciousness, for example weak realistic goals in study and employment, unclear life-long planning, being ambitious with no actions. They have goals, but was distracted by other tempts, failing in making enough efforts to perceive and struggle for their goals.

Graduate students are in older age, and many of them have working experience. Therefore, they have quite realistic goal in research, which is for better employment opportunity or further study chance. When asked "plans for the next three years", 41.4% of them is preparing for hunting a decent job, 38.2% for further study, 17.3% do not have a plan. Some students even just kill time in university, waiting for a diploma of master degree. An after-class schedule survey shows that the top three favored arrangements are "self-study or lectures", "others" and "surfing on-line or playing computer games", accounting 33.9%, 22.2% and 20.7% respectively. Graduates keep loose daily routine, do not pay enough efforts to make their dream come true. It is no doubt a big concern is on whether or not they will qualify for decent job requirements.

##### 3.1.2. Problems in Independent Innovation Spirit

In the national documents *national long-term science and technology development plan*, it requires that: adhere to independent innovation, promote science development. China is increasingly aware of the importance of independent innovation, and play active to build an innovation-oriented country. In the entire high-level education system, graduates rank high and are regarded as social elite. Although different in training mode such as science degree master or professional degree master, graduate cultivation aims to the same target – cultivate independent innovation spirit. "To cultivate the innovative ability of graduate students, the cultivation of scientific research literacy is the foundation and guarantee of innovative ability" [7]. Graduate students are ambitious in their academic field and realize the importance of independent innovation. However, affected by exam-oriented education and traditional view, they dare not to break the thought shackles. At the same time, china is still in the process of building its innovation system. The authorities provide relatively less innovation opportunity to its people. In addition, academic protection, utilitarianism, and impetuous mind develop the situation from bad to worse. What's more, in order to seize fame, graduates follow tutors' command closely, instead of expressing their own idea. Some even plagiarize others' research results. Academic misconduct occurs now and then. All those contribute to the difficulty of graduate in finding a balance about innovation between reality and ideal life.

### **3.1.3. Problems in Independent Problem-solving Ability**

As high-level talents, graduates show the courage to bear high sense of responsibility, either in personal, family, or to the society and the state. Economically, most graduates don't want to rely on their family to pursue study, but make their efforts to earn money or even support their family to some degree; psychologically, most graduates choose to solve problems by themselves instead of depending on his parents. Besides, they pay a lot of attention and concern to social issues and national development. According to the investigation on current affairs, 35.4% of graduates choose the option of "very concern", 60.6% is "general concern", only a few "no concern". But at the same time, the negative side should be clearly realized, which is that graduates are generally lack of social experience and don't have enough ability to solve personal, family and social problems. Especially for those graduates from the single-child family, they possess poor independent problem-solving ability because of their doting parents. What's more, some graduate students require too much from society, just want to perform their right but not to fulfill obligations. Such self-conscious become the biggest obstacle for them to meet society requirements.

### **3.1.4. Problems in Independent Problem-solving Ability**

Graduates is under heavy pressure, mainly about employment and economy, such as pressure in course learning, scholarship rating, academic research, tuition fee, living cost, interpersonal relation and so on. Though treated as adults, graduates are fragile in heart under their strong surface. It is natural that they can't adjust to society or find right way to solve various problems of learning, love, economy, etc. Pressure is likely to overwhelm students if not treated properly, even lead graduates to commit suicide or to drop out from school. Statistics show that: when facing stress, 56% of graduate students never think or not want to do psychological consultation, some even don't know where the position of psychological counseling room situates on the campus. Without self-adjustment ability, the only result is underestimating oneself, even lose confidence.

### **3.1.5. Problems in Independent Choice-making Ability**

The 21st century is an information age. Network, spreading to each corner of the earth, plays the role of encyclopedia or dustbin. On one hand, it is the ocean of knowledge where people can look for information easily. On the other hand, it is glutted with meaningless information. Network likes a double-edged sword. It is people who decide how to use it.

Network connects closely with graduates, who spend much time surfing internet and browse useful or harmful information at the same time. Some websites, like baidu, China cnki, campus network, can feed them with knowledge; some like QQ, MSN, renren social network, microblog can promote the relationship among graduates. However, pornographic website and rubbish information spread harmful message and have bad influence on students. On the internet, some graduate students cannot identify right from wrong, spread malicious rumors without thinking, or even be addicted to computer games. In the information age, internet develops

with advantages and disadvantages. Network makes graduate students keep step with time, pay close attention to latest news and hot issues. But at the same time, without orientation in the sea of information, graduates are easily used by people with ulterior motives. Therefore, it is important for graduates to construct their Independent Choice-making Ability.

### **3.2. Necessity for Graduates' Independent-ability Cultivation**

The above five problems restrict further development of graduates and impact a great bad influence on education. Therefore, how to strengthen their independent-ability is critical in improving high-level education quality. However, there is no previous study on Graduates' independent-ability cultivation. The current study needs to make a breakthrough. "Orientation-participatory" system proposes a new way of cultivating graduates. In order to construct an innovation-oriented country, the thesis is to provide theoretical guidance for graduate education and seek available strategies to fulfill gaps exposed in education practice. "Orientation-participatory" system is expected to inspire the graduates' independent-ability cultivation and shed some light on further study.

## **4. Principles of Graduates' Independent-ability Cultivation**

Comparing with undergraduate students, graduate students are characterized by elder age, independent ideology, unique value standard and individual belief. However, it doesn't mean graduate students have acquired independent ability. On the contrary, without correct and timely guidance, graduates will gradually develop the harmful habits such as slacking off in study, laziness, self-righteousness and some others, which prevent them growing to talents. Graduates' independent-ability cultivation should adhere to the principles of people-oriented, ability-focused, guidance-strengthened and broad participation.

### **4.1. People-oriented**

According to the "people-oriented" educational philosophy, "the fundamental goal of postgraduate moral education is to promote the comprehensive growth of students" [8]. Specifically, to realize the principle of people-oriented, graduates should be considered as basic factor, fully respect their features and personality, by encouraging their initiatives and serve for their growing up. Firstly, in order to cultivate graduates independent-ability, it is necessary to grasp the characteristics of the graduate students and understand their needs as well as respecting their personality. Only in this way, the graduates can be taught in accordance with their aptitude and the teachers can teach according to the need. Secondly, cultivating graduates' independent-ability should take the graduate students as education subject, and give full play of their subjective initiative. Therefore, graduates can put their knowledge into practice, and improve their consciousness in

self-education. Finally, the ultimate aim of cultivation should be focused on the graduates’ growing up. The graduates’ independent-ability should not be excluded from the task of cultivation because it is not only the basic content of graduate education but also works as the basic and premise of their growing up, thus should never be neglected in education program.

#### 4.2. Ability-focused

Graduates’ independent-ability, just as its name implying, is mainly about the ability cultivation. Graduates’ independent-ability is a kind of basic and comprehensive ability, one of the core competitiveness of graduate students as well. Spontaneous struggle consciousness and independent innovation spirit are not only ideological level things, but also the symbol of ability. The so-called “unifying knowledge with practice” means that the graduates should not only have a clear goal and lofty spiritual target, but also have determination of pursuing their goal without hesitation and the ability of achieving the aim by overcoming all difficulties. Independent problem-solving ability means the skills of dealing with questions from difficult scientific research to small life chores. The self-adjustment ability basically includes searching information, consulting physician, adhering to self-discipline principle, training body and mind so as to get rid of physical or mental discomfort. Independent choice-making ability covers information screening, mate choice, career planning and so on. Graduates’ independent-ability cultivation is not a simple knowledge input, for its final purpose is to improve their ability by teaching them how to fish rather than giving them fish directly.

#### 4.3. Guidance-strengthened

Without orientation, graduates’ independent-ability can’t be effectively cultivated. “Mentors are the key force in implementing values guidance” [9]. Graduates need tutors’ help to perform the role of education subject. Here come to the question: how should tutors perform their duty? Orientation role of graduate education administrators is the key answer to this question. Graduate students hold independent ideological point of view and self-education ability. According to their characteristics, on the dominant position of education, what graduates demand is not simply knowledge provided by teachers, but the reasonable way of leading them to cultivate their own independent ability, such as selecting relevant teaching materials, creating appropriate environment and more opportunity for improvement in their self-taught competence. On the contrary, indoctrination approach gets half the results with double the effort, and cramming method of teaching will only turn out to be just the opposite of tutors’ wish.

#### 4.4. Broad Participation

The best way of improving one’s ability is to practice. Therefore, traditional teaching practices, in which the teacher takes the role of the monologist while the students are

audience, have to be changed. Moreover, it is reasonable to adopt education measures that can bring out more chance for students to do social practice. Investigations demonstrate that the most available mean is to provide more social practice and training opportunities for students on campus, which has a great significance in expanding communication channels between graduate students and the social reality. As a result, activities for practicing and training, as the most popular way among graduates, are likely to bring out refined results in cultivating their independent-ability.

### 5. “Orientation-participatory” Cultivation System

Many reasons contribute to shortage of graduates’ independent-ability, which can be mainly summarized as three aspects: social environment, education administrators, and graduates themselves. There are both external and internal reasons. “Orientation-participatory” graduates’ independent-ability cultivation system is to give full play to the external factor *orientation* and the internal factor *participatory*, and to construct a graduate education management system which covers four latitudes in education content, education method, education subject, and education environment and includes many levels such as management regulation, autonomous platform and campus culture and so on.

#### 5.1. Orientation of Ideological Education- Participatory Capability Exercising

Graduates’ independent-ability cultivation mainly includes two complementary aspects, namely consciousness cultivation and ability enhancement. The former one trains students to form spontaneous struggle consciousness, independent innovation spirit and healthy mental value, etc, which is achieved by orientation means such as theme education and knowledge diffusion. Studies have shown that “it is very important to carry out necessary in-depth communication and pre-school cognitive guidance before postgraduate training” [10]. Meanwhile, the latter one focuses on the cultivation of innovation, execution, problem-solving capability, psychological adjustment ability, choice-making power and so on, improved by regular participatory methods such as taking part in activities, overcoming obstacles, using gained knowledge. Consciousness cultivation is the foundation of and is promoted by ability enhancement. Therefore, orientation and participatory combine two inseparable sides of a coin, complementing each other in the process of graduate education.

#### 5.2. Orientation of Implicit Education- Participatory Explicit Education

“In the context of the complexity of world development, the traditional moral education work system for graduate students based on explicit education models appears to be inadequate” [11]. Graduates’ independent-ability cultivation should make

comprehensive use of implicit education and explicit education. Splendid implicit education factors such as education environment, research atmosphere can improve graduates' independent-ability. While with excellent explicit education activities, graduate students can gain more opportunity to take part in the campus life, improve their capability and responsibility. Implicit education pays attention to establish education system and long-term independent-ability cultivation mechanism, to enhance the quality of education administrators and student cadre through regular training practices, to optimize hardware facilities for graduates' self-management and to foster good study style by strict management, etc. Explicit education includes organizing student favored and high-quality activity, for example paper-writing contest, literature-searching contest, psychology seminar and skills competition so as to stimulate their interest, promote graduates' comprehensive ability, scientific research level and capability of psychological adjustment.

### **5.3. Orientation of Education Subject- Participatory Education Object**

Graduates' independent-ability cultivation includes not only education administrators, tutors but also graduates themselves who are also education objects [12]. Education administrators and tutors, as the education subjects, mainly play the role of orientation, while graduate students, as the education subject, enhance their awareness and ability mainly through participatory. Due to the dual subject education of orientation and participatory, graduates, as an object, are able to improve their independent-ability. In *Ministry of Education's Certain Opinions on Further Strengthening and Improving the Ideological and Political Education of graduates*, it is explicitly pointed out that, "The graduate students ideological and political education work force is the organized guarantee to strengthen and improve the ideological and political education of graduates", is not only the academic instructor of graduate students, but also the guide of the graduates' journey of life, who plays an important orientated role in the daily management and education. By joining in "3-assistant" activities and some graduate organizations such as Graduate Organization and Graduate Innovation Center, graduates, as the subject of self-education [13], raise their consciousness and ability, mobilize their enthusiasm of participation at different levels and play a key role in society.

### **5.4. Orientation of Education Environment- Participatory Education Carrier**

Graduates' independent-ability cultivation also needs to construct a good education environment and create a well education carrier [14]. Education environment plays an implicit orientated effect, and education carrier provides paths and platforms for graduates' independent-ability cultivation. In the aspect of constructing education environment for cultivating graduates' independent-ability, it includes establishing relevant rules and regulations and getting graduates informed, keeping graduate students self-restraint

and self-controlled, creating a website which is convenient for graduates to gain relevant information in time, setting up an invisible safeguard to do a good job in network supervision, establishing more students organizations besides Graduate Organization and Grade Class Committee, propagandizing graduates' independent-ability culture on the campus, etc. As for creating education carrier for graduates' independent-ability cultivation, the useful methods includes "Universities, research institutes, and industry enterprises jointly establish a base for graduate education innovation" [15], constructing graduate innovation center to provide place and equipment for innovation, equipped with mentors, establishing graduate psychological counseling room to provide psychological consultation service, establishing graduate career research section to lead and urge graduates' career plan, establishing graduate inspirational publicity teams or typical representative publicity teams to improve graduate students' enterprising consciousness, building graduate training-practicing base to improve graduates' social adaptation ability and problem-solving ability, and so on.

## **6. Conclusion**

Graduates' independent-ability gives students a chance to full play their role so as to exploit their self-education and self-accomplishment capability. Based on the principles of people-oriented, ability-focused, guidance-strengthened and broad participation, "Orientation-participatory" graduates' independent-ability cultivation system gives full play to the external factor orientation and the internal factor participatory, and construct a graduate education management system which covers four latitudes, namely education content, education method, education subject and education environment, and includes many levels such as management regulation, independent platform and campus culture, and so on.

Graduates' independent-ability means that postgraduates acquire the ability of self-education and self-accomplishment for the reason of their own spirit and strength instead of supervision of other people. Graduates' independent-ability cultivation is the implement of ability as well as the embodiment of graduates' self-education. Graduates' independent-ability cultivation should adhere to the principles of people-oriented, ability-focused, guidance-strengthened and broad participation. Many reasons contribute to shortage of graduates' independent-ability, which can be mainly summarized as three aspects: social environment, education administrators, and graduates themselves.

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