

The Cultivation of Competition Ability of Law Students Under the Background of New Liberal Arts

Wanchun Zhang

Faculty of Law, College of Applied Arts and Sciences of Beijing Union University, Beijing, China

Abstract: Law students often face an awkward situation when participating in discipline competitions: the competition of law majors is relatively low level, while the comprehensive competition of higher level is easy to make law students afraid of difficulties. These are also clearly reflected in the literature research of law competition. The background of new liberal arts puts forward higher requirements for the competition ability of law students, and also makes the traditional problems in the competition more obvious. In competition practice, the lack of competition knowledge and ability of law students formed around the baton of China National Judicial Examination is more prominent. What kind of abilities do law students need, and how to improve them? Based on the guiding practice and empirical analysis of the China University Business Elite Challenge of CCPIT, law students should be trained to acquire information ability, writing ability, expression ability and presentation ability. Therefore, multi-level practice and teaching should be driven by the comprehensive competition with the attributes of new liberal arts, schools should strengthen the recognition and reward of the competition, and teachers should pay attention to the transformation of teacher-led research advantages in the competition.

Keywords: New Liberal Arts; Law Competition; Competition Ability; Graduate student competition.

1. Literature review of Legal Competitions in the context of New Liberal Arts in China

The construction of new liberal arts can be studied in various contexts, but all aim at the reform of higher education and the optimization of talent cultivation models. The establishment of "Yuanpei College" in Peking University in the early years clearly reflected the connotation of the construction of new liberal arts, adhering to the interdisciplinary and comprehensive characteristics of liberal arts. In recent years, the construction of new liberal arts promoted in the field of higher education in China is a top-down policy incentive mechanism and system.

The research on the practice of legal competitions in the context of new liberal arts can be sorted out from the following four aspects: (1) the relationship between the context of new liberal arts and competitions; (2) college students' competitions; (3) the relationship between competitions and the reform and innovation of higher education; (4) the practice of graduate students' competitions.

1.1. New Liberal arts background and competition

Research articles on the new liberal arts background and competitions are relatively few. Wang Yanlin, Yang Zhaoting, and Zhao Pengfei (2022) constructed a practical teaching model driven by discipline competitions and assisted by innovation and entrepreneurship under the guidance of the new liberal arts based on cognitive learning theory and constructivist learning theory. Tian Yuan and Liu Gangtian (2022) think that participating in professional competitions in the new liberal arts context is beneficial to students in stimulating their learning motivation and creative thinking, promoting teacher-student communication, and prompting teachers to continuously update their knowledge systems and push forward the reform of teaching modes. Yan Xinxin and

He Yinjuan (2024) believe that the status of discipline competitions in the new liberal arts construction context is becoming increasingly important, not only as an important part of innovation and entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions, but also as an important means of enhancing the combination of theory and practice for college students and highlighting the characteristics of the new liberal arts. Liu Gang, Wang Wenqi, and Zhao Kaiqin (2024) reckon that the new liberal arts construction puts forward new requirements for applied talent cultivation, and that the synergy between discipline competitions and innovation and entrepreneurship education is an important means of achieving the goals of the new liberal arts construction.

1.2. Traditional Law Competitions for College Students

There are relatively rich articles on "university competitions," but few on legal courses or articles. Currently, searching for articles with the keywords "law" and "competition" and filtering them, there are only six genuine literature. These literature mainly analyze the practice of participating in competitions in their own schools as an empirical study, pointing out the importance of competitions in cultivating students' professional abilities and improving teaching, involving the law schools or legal departments of Sichuan International Studies University, Beijing Materials University, Northwest University of Political Science and Law, Jilin University, Zhejiang Gongshang University, and China University of Political Science and Law. These important literature are summarized as follows. Heng Aiming and Wei Jiaojiao (2021) analyze the correlation between subject competitions and the cultivation of college students' comprehensive abilities based on empirical experience, deeply exploring the training path of law majors' innovative ability through subject competitions as the carrier. Liu Jie (2021) argues the feasibility of integrating college students' innovation and entrepreneurship competitions with legal innovation and entrepreneurship courses, and designs the

course teaching plan for legal innovation and entrepreneurship course reform with the competition as the orientation. Yao Xiaojie (2017) points out that traditional legal education is difficult to effectively meet the needs of high-quality legal talents with international exposure. Introducing international simulated court competitions is an important way to cultivate international legal talents, and proposes the design of legal innovation and entrepreneurship course reform oriented towards innovation and entrepreneurship competitions. Li Qiang (2014) discusses the internationalization of undergraduate legal education by focusing on the role and application of international simulated court competitions, and explores how to specifically apply this new teaching method in teaching practice. Tian Hongyun (2015) analyzes the relationship between vocational ability training objectives and competitions by taking the first Northeast Colleges Simulated Court Competition participated by the School of Law, Jilin University as an example, and achieves the training of law students' professional abilities and the link. Tan Shiqian, Su Xinjian, and Dong Wenhui (2014) pointed out that legal education has faced problems such as a disconnection between theory and practice, a lack of innovative consciousness, low practical ability, and a persistently low employment rate of law majors. The School of Law, Zhejiang Gongshang University, took the first Law Student Legal Professional Ability Competition in Zhejiang Province as an entry point and improved the quality of legal talent cultivation through a series of competitions.

1.3. The relationship between competitions and higher education reform and innovation

The relationship between competitions and higher education reform can be divided into two main categories: one is a systematic theoretical discussion on the relationship between competitions and practical teaching, highlighting the important value of competitions; the other is a quantitative analysis of the problems in competitions and suggestions for improvement based on specific competitions. The following selected articles provide a comprehensive review.

(1) Systematic theoretical discussion. Zhang Ruicheng, Chen Zhikun, and Wang Fubin (2010) analyzed the importance and problems of practical teaching and proposed the idea of transforming discipline competition content into college students' practical teaching and specific ways. Sun Ailiang and Wang Ziteng (2012) analyzed the role of discipline competitions and proposed that a discipline competition platform should be established to carry out various discipline competitions to cultivate high-quality innovative talents. Li Guofeng, Zhang Shiyang, and Li Bin (2013) discussed the "three-in-one" innovative ability cultivation model based on course teaching, competition projects, and technical training. Zhang Ziyang (2014) believed that discipline competitions are an important carrier for cultivating and improving students' innovative ability and practical ability, and have special innovative education functions that cannot be achieved by conventional teaching.

(2) Quantitative analysis of specific competitions. Ding Sanqing (2007) analyzed the problems in the "Challenge Cup" National Collegiate Entrepreneurship Competition and the defects in China's higher education, namely, the exam-oriented education and utilitarian competitions, elitist education and idealistic competitions, low student participation in research and strong college-oriented competition entries, and the closed nature of university

research and indifferent attitude of enterprises towards competition participation should be broken. Shan Yaojun and Zhang Xiaosheng (2008) analyzed the new development of college science and technology education and its problems and countermeasures from the perspective of the "Challenge Cup" National Collegiate Competition. Ding Sanqing, Wang Xipeng and Chen Bin (2009) take "Challenge Cup" National extracurricular academic science and technology works Competition for college students as an example to make an empirical analysis of academic science and technology innovation activities and innovative education in Chinese universities. Xie Jinxing (2009) expounded the promoting role of the National Mathematical Contest in Modeling for College students in cultivating their practical ability, innovative ability and improving their comprehensive quality. Yin Shi and Xiao Kan (2009) proposed that we should participate in various disciplinary competitions, organize competitions independently, establish a multi-disciplinary training system with electronic design competition as the main body, and build a distinctive platform for multi-disciplinary competition for college students. Fu Xiong and Chen Chunling (2011) expounded the role and implementation experience of science and technology competition in the cultivation of college students' innovation ability.

1.4. The Current State of Graduate Competitions

The core of graduate education lies in cultivating the innovative capabilities of graduate students, and competition practice serves as an essential means for graduate students to move beyond scholarly learning and develop their innovative abilities. Objectively speaking, the competitions accessible to law graduate students within the liberal arts discipline remain highly limited at present. Take, for instance, the "China Graduate Innovation and Practice Series Contest," which is currently the most significant graduate competition. This competition was established in 2013 and is currently guided by the Department of Degree Administration and Graduate Education of the Ministry of Education, jointly hosted by the China Association for Degree and Graduate Education and the Youth Science and Technology Center of the China Association for Science and Technology. It is currently the sole national event specifically targeted at graduate students and recognized and guided by the government. As of now, this event has given rise to a series of thematic competitions, such as the "National Graduate Smart City Technology and Creative Design Competition," the "National Graduate Mathematical Modeling Competition," the "China Graduate Electronic Design Competition," the "National Petroleum Engineering Design Competition," the "National Graduate Mobile Terminal Application Design and Innovation Competition," the "China Graduate Future Aircraft Innovation Competition," the "China Graduate Public Management Case Competition," the "China MPAcc Student Case Competition," and the "China Graduate Oil Equipment Innovation Design Competition." [1] Among these competitions, the choices available to law graduate students are rather limited. In the academic years of 2024 and 2025, the innovation and practice contest will feature 19 thematic events, among which the newly added "Cultural China" Two-Creation Competition and the International Chinese Education Case Competition in 2024 are relatively more accommodating to liberal arts students. [2]

From the perspective of research literature, the mainstream direction of graduate competition research is still the cultivation of innovative thinking and ability of graduate students, with emphasis on non-liberal arts competitions such as mathematical modeling and electronic design (Zhang Hongjun, Li Huabing, Lu Houqing, 2009; Sun Jianwei, 2012; Hu Wei et al., 2015; Chen Qiping et al., 2020; Xing Slim, Li Zhigang, 2022; Du Yan, Hu Xinyang, 2023). The research of graduate competition involves the necessity and value of competition, the problems existing in competition and the suggestions for improvement. Wang Jing, Zhou LAN and Huang Cailun (2020) believe that the cultivation of applied innovation practical ability of graduate students and the construction of graduate innovation training base are still weak in China. Shi Yaoyuan and Li Yuliang (2018) believe that graduate competition has become an important carrier for cultivating innovative thinking and quality of graduate students, and an effective means and measure to improve graduate students' innovative practical ability. In order to improve the comprehensive benefit of discipline competition, it is necessary to perfect the evaluation mechanism and establish the incentive system. Give full play to the role of alumni to enhance the social influence of discipline competition.

2. Problems in the Training of College Law Students' Competition Ability

The training of law students' competition ability is carried out around three main problems. First, what knowledge and ability should law students possess under the new liberal arts background? Second, what measures and ways should law teachers take to cultivate students' quality and ability under the background of new liberal arts? Third, what are the most important factors affecting the cultivation of students' knowledge and ability in the context of new liberal arts? Can these factors be changed, and how?

2.1. Students lack knowledge and ability under the baton of China National Judicial Examination [3]

In addition to the professional ability of law, the knowledge of business, management and finance is relatively lacking. However, whether you are a judge, prosecutor or lawyer in the future, you will need this comprehensive knowledge. This is also an important reason why law students are first mentioned in the new Liberal Arts Excellence Program. As a legal practitioner, in addition to mastering the necessary legal professional knowledge, the lawyer's business will also involve a large number of companies and enterprises business operation and management, and even corporate finance. In addition, in the information society and digital age, the ability of processing the information through the hardware and software is also very important. The necessary PPT making technology and resume making technology and ability, as well as the graphics processing and information collection and processing ability are all indispensable necessary abilities and qualities for law students to find jobs. The problem is that relevant courses have been offered, but the application of these skills in students' professional practice, and even in the process of students looking for jobs, is seriously lacking. The writing of the resume of law graduates is flawed both in form and content. This is actually a widespread and serious problem. Therefore, how to learn the knowledge and ability

to adapt to the rapid changes of society in an all-round way, how to learn from mastering knowledge to transforming knowledge into ability, is a common problem facing teachers and students.

2.2. Influencing factors of competition knowledge and ability training

Competition practice, practice system and ideological and political construction of law curriculum should be carried out around students. The senior undergraduate and graduate students of law should not be satisfied with the examination of law to obtain the qualification certificate. If everything revolves around a qualification examination, this baton will greatly limit the quality and ability of law students. How to solve this problem and explore the different qualities and abilities that senior law students and master's students should have? Under the background of the new liberal arts, how to develop the curriculum ideological and political construction, how to cultivate these qualities and abilities, how to make students consciously realize the importance and necessity of such qualities and abilities, and how to drive practical innovation with competition practice have strong practical significance for solving these problems.

The important factors affecting the cultivation of students' knowledge, quality and ability under the background of new liberal arts can be explored from the following aspects: (1) China National Judicial Examination complex. Only paying attention to the National Legal Professional Qualification Examination while ignoring other knowledge and ability is inadvisable. For the subjects that are not tested in the law examination, they do not love to study or give up studying, and everything only focuses on the law examination. How to break this curse is the key to solving the multi-structure ability training of law students. (2) Insufficient understanding and professional degree of competition practice. Insufficient understanding of the importance of competition practice, insufficient professional degree of students in competition practice, and outstanding coping behavior need to be focused. (3) Fear of difficulty. It is common for students to escape and find excuses when encountering difficulties in learning and practice. In the course of classroom learning, the phenomenon of recitation in the final concentration is prominent; In the practice of competition, when they encounter relevant difficulties, they withdraw, feel that they are not able to give up, and some even withdraw from the competition. (4) Teamwork spirit. Solidarity, cooperation and equal competition consciousness in learning and practice are not enough, and there is still more free-riding phenomenon, which seriously affect the competition and the education.

2.3. How to cultivate students' knowledge and ability through competition

In addition to off-campus practice, practice experts into the classroom and entrepreneurial practice, how to cultivate students' knowledge and ability through competition? (1) Competition Practice: What kind of competition should students participate in? In the process of the competition, will students' field research ability, social ability, language expression ability, debate and presentation ability, academic writing ability (including PPT making ability) and many other important abilities be improved? (2) Teacher practice related to competition: how to guide the competition and how to obtain the comprehensive ability of corresponding competition guidance? If the instructor does not have enough

practical experience, he or she may not be able to guide students with The Times by relying only on the accumulated knowledge or relevant experience. (3) Research practice related to the competition: Can research practice be carried out through the original undergraduate tutorial system? Is it suitable for all students? What are the differences between undergraduate and postgraduate research practices? How to coordinate the competition supervisor with the thesis supervisor and the graduate supervisor?

3. Analysis of Competition Ability Requirements of Law Students: Based on China University Business Elite Challenge (CUBEC) [4]

New liberal arts and interdisciplinary disciplines have put forward higher requirements for legal education. The challenge of cultivating innovative, composite and applied talents is very severe for law students. We need improve the management of higher education, promote the scientific positioning and differentiated development of institutions of higher learning, integrate innovation and entrepreneurship education into the whole process of personnel training, establish a sound mechanism for dynamic adjustment of disciplines and specialties, accelerate the construction of first-class universities and first-class disciplines, promote coordinated innovation between industry, university and research institutes, actively participate in the implementation of the innovation-driven development strategy, and focus on cultivating innovative, versatile and application-oriented personnel.

From the perspective of competition, students should not be limited to participating in relatively traditional professional competitions such as Moot court competition and legal debate contest, otherwise students' comprehensive ability can not be further exercised and practiced, nor can they meet the cultivation of law students' composite comprehensive ability under the background of new liberal arts.

What kind of comprehensive ability law students need to cultivate varies a lot in different opinions. However, combined with the experience of guiding the National Business Elite Competition for three years and the investigation of the competition team, the author can give a perspective of the problem. Based on the experience of the National Business Elite Competition, Exhibition Innovation Competition and international trade competition under the guidance of the author from 2021 to 2024, the ability to participate in the competition is divided into nine types: (1) information acquisition ability (information collection and processing ability); (2) The ability to obtain first-hand information (questionnaire preparation and inspection); (3) Report writing ability (writing ability); (4) PPT production ability; (5) Expression and display; (6) teamwork ability and leadership; (7) Risk identification, response and resolution ability; (8) contingency ability; (9) Research ability. According to the investigation of the 18 students who finally entered the finals and won the prize in 2022, the nine major abilities were divided into five gradients: very much strong, very strong, average, very weak and very much weak. The nine competences of each group are shown below (see Table 1):

Table 1. Survey of Competition ability of law students attending CUBEC

No.	information acquisition ability	ability to obtain first-hand information	report writing ability	PPT production ability	expression and display	teamwork and leadership	risk identification & resolution	contingency ability	research ability
1	average	average	very strong	very strong	very strong	very strong	average	average	very strong
2	average	average	very strong	very strong	average	average	average	very strong	average
3	average	average	very strong	very strong	very strong	very strong	average	average	very strong
4	average	average	very strong	very weak	very strong	very strong	very strong	average	very strong
5	average	average	average	very strong	average	average	average	average	average
6	average	average	very strong	very strong	very strong	very strong	very strong	average	average
7	very strong	average	very strong	average	very strong	very strong	very strong	average	average
8	average	average	average	very strong	average	average	average	very weak	average
9	average	average	average	average	very strong	average	average	average	average
10	average	very weak	very strong	average	very weak	average	average	average	average
11	average	average	average	Very weak	average	average	average	average	average
12	average	average	average	very strong	very weak	average	very weak	average	average
13	average	average	average	average	very strong	average	average	average	average
14	very weak	very weak	very strong	average	very much strong	very strong	average	very much strong	very weak
15	average	very weak	very strong	average	average	average	very weak	average	very weak
16	average	average	very strong	average	average	very strong	average	average	very strong
17	average	average	average	average	average	very strong	average	average	average
18	average	average	average	average	very much strong	average	average	very much strong	average

Based on the table 1, it can be found that the following rules exist in the abilities that students need to acquire: (1) The weakest ability: All students have the weakest ability in

information acquisition and investigation, or it is precisely the type of ability that the competition itself should emphasize and can acquire. Students' " ability to obtain first-hand

information " is the weakest, either "average" or "very weak". In addition to a "strong" and a "very weak", the other abilities are "average". (2) Relatively weak ability: risk identification and resolution ability, contingency ability and research ability, which are relatively weak ability of the three groups of students, but also the ability that students can not get in the classroom but should get. The degree of risk synthesis and integration of exhibition activities is high. In the process of investigation, students are faced with exhibition risks such as booth collapse risk, traffic risk, exhibition fraud, repeated exhibition, etc., and they also need to face many risks such as language conflict, questionnaire loss, activity fraud and personal safety in the process of investigation, which need to be identified and dealt with in the investigation. How to obtain high-quality questionnaire responses and high-quality conversation when the interviewee is busy or has no time to fill in the questionnaire or accept the interview is an important part of the improvability. In terms of research ability, although the answer of the four groups of students is "strong", it is obvious that this is an overestimation of the students themselves, and this is confirmed by the writing result page of the later research report. (3) Relatively strong ability: report writing ability, PPT making ability, expression and presentation ability, team cooperation ability and leadership ability, these four groups of abilities are relatively "strong" for students, and the proportion of "strong" is more than 1/3, among which "expression and presentation ability" and "report writing ability" account for more than 1/2. It is important to note that there is no "very weak" option, which is of course the result of students' self-perception. Of course, this does not mean that the true state of competence is such.

4. Suggestions for Law Students' Competition Practice

Law students, whether undergraduate (especially senior) or graduate students, should strive for the opportunity to participate in provincial, national and international competitions if they have it. In addition to students taking the initiative, school authorities and teachers should play a leading role.

4.1. Multi-level practice and teaching driven by comprehensive competition with new liberal arts attributes

Driven by competition practice, it integrates teaching, practice, research, competition, investigation, employment promotion and entrepreneurship promotion, so that students can learn multi-dimensional knowledge and exercise multi-dimensional quality and ability as much as possible. Result-oriented, practice-guided and competition-driven abilities and qualities needed in practice into students through learning and training should be integrated. In competition practice, attention should be paid to national competitions recognized by schools and included in the catalog recognized by the Chinese Association of Higher Education. These competitions are more mature, which is more secure for the training of students' ability. High quality competition can significantly improve the quality and ability of students in many aspects. Based on the competition goal pursuit and ability training requirements, teachers are required to promote their own practice, classroom teaching, inviting experts into

the classroom and other aspects.

4.2. The school shall strengthen the recognition and reward of the landing competition

First of all, the school should determine the focus and reward method of the competition. The prize for the competition is not only focused on the students, but also the instructor. Therefore, the reward policy and system design should focus on teachers. Secondly, the consistency and long-term nature of school reward policies should be ensured. In the context of the epidemic, the recognition and reward mechanism of the school for the competition may encounter relatively big obstacles, and the incentive funds and incentive mechanism still need to be guaranteed. Thirdly, it should be distinguished between participating in the competition and creating the competition and encourage them separately. There is a world of difference between participating in the competition and establishing the competition for the publicity and reputation of a school. So, we should not only focus on participating in the competition but also pay more attention to the establishment of the competition.

4.3. Adhere to the transformation of research advantages led by teachers in competitions

Law research can not only feed teaching, but also feed competition. Research back feeding competition puts forward higher requirements than back feeding teaching. How does research feed back into competition? The mechanism of research refeeding competition is to select the appropriate competition, determine the appropriate topic and give the appropriate guidance. For law students, if they choose a comprehensive competition, there is no doubt that the instructor's scope of research is the first requirement. When the appropriate theme of the competition is determined, teachers should pay special attention to the topic that combines cutting-edge, innovative and traditional, which is also a test for teachers to grasp the foundation and the latest trend of research. The guidance to students in the competition process directly reflects the teacher's research ability on a specific topic. Without the advantages of teachers in research, the advantages of competition results are difficult to reflect.

Acknowledgments

This study is a result of the Beijing Union University 2022 Educational Teaching Research and Reform Project "Research on Law Postgraduate Practice Innovation Driven by Competitions from the Perspective of New Liberal Arts" (Project Number: JY2022Z002) and the 2022 Beijing Higher Education Undergraduate Teaching Reform and Innovation Project "Innovations and Practices in the Cultivation Model of Applied Talents in New Liberal Arts Rooted in Beijing Culture Integration and Synthesis".

References

- [1] <https://cpipc.acge.org.cn/pw/introl/%E5%A4%A7%E8%B5%9B%E7%AE%80%E4%BB%8B>.
- [2] <https://cpipc.acge.org.cn/pw/detail/2c9080178ee9c636018f5229d0151b5a>.
- [3] <http://www.moj.gov.cn>.
- [4] The information of CUBEC is available at <http://cubec.org.cn/>.