

Reflections on Academic Guidance for University Students in the Internet Age

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Abstract: With the rapid development of society, the economy and information technology have advanced, the production and dissemination of knowledge have increased exponentially, and serious problems have arisen in the traditional educational system, educational content, and students' learning concepts and methods. Good research on academic advising for college students is needed to strengthen the competitiveness of the national core and achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation; at the same time, it is also directly related to the all-round development of students and can help them grow well and succeed. Although the current academic guidance for college students has gained more attention, it is still in a general-applicability model. According to the idea of "Classification for Excellence, Diversified Paths to Success", a full-fledged and stable working model has not yet been established. Based on practical work, the author has accumulated some ideas for academic guidance of college students at higher education institutions: During the course of academic guidance for college students, it is necessary to update and innovate their learning concepts, spread various learning methods, promote innovative learning education, guide students to develop reading habits, carry out career planning education, continually strengthen the student growth-oriented educational concept, and actively lead students to use AI tools in their studies.

Keywords: Academic guidance, Higher education institutions, Academic advisors, Educational philosophy

1. Research Background

Research on academic counselling for college students will help strengthen the core competitiveness of our country and achieve the goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. During the important period of students' growth and development, academic counselling at higher education institutions can help students know what to study, how to study, and how well they have learned; thus, it will help them continue to grow and become the foundation of the country. To foster excellent talent and realise the "Four Services", higher education institutions should start with talent cultivation, build an all-encompassing academic guidance system, and serve students to help them grow well and succeed. Higher education in China has reached a stage of massification and continues to expand in scale. College students are very diverse in all aspects, and their academic performance, learning abilities and ways of studying are all different; the problems they face are also varied. Some students are not studying well, and others are too focused on grades. Although they are in different situations, both hinder normal growth and development. Many studies have shown that foreign academic counselling has been well-developed, but there are still no ideas on how to draw inspiration from it. China has different national conditions, different goals for higher education institutions, and various educational environments. Therefore, we need to base the concept of "Classification for Excellence, Diversified Paths to Success" on the actual conditions of Chinese higher education institutions to carry out effective research on academic advising and guide our practical work.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Current Research Status in China

Some scholars have specified the concept of academic counselling from the perspective of teachers, others have considered it from the perspectives of both recipients and subjects of students, and some have defined academic counselling by focusing on students with academic difficulties (Pang Haishao

and others, 2009). However, most studies have shown from all sides that the service recipients of academic advising are a large number of students, the organising unit is the university, and the purpose of the work is to help students solve their study problems and achieve all-round development. The range of the academic problems is not the same for all scholars. Some scholars have broadly defined it to include all kinds of psychological counselling and career guidance that aim to promote the all-round development of students under the umbrella of school guidance. Other scholars have defined it more narrowly and believe that the focus of academic counselling should be on supporting learning. The author believes that is the case in this paper, but it does not only mention the process of learning. This paper believes that learning-related concepts, psychology and career planning can all be covered by the scope of academic counselling.

Evolution of the Concept of Academic Advising: Theoretical Basis and Development of Academic Advising in Chinese Higher Education Institutions Show How Higher Education Has Changed from a Management-Oriented Model to a Service-Oriented One, and How It Has Moved from a Unified Model to a Personalised Development Model. Sun Sun (2017) studies the theoretical foundation of building a student-oriented academic counselling system in higher education institutions based on the concept of student-centered education. Based on the above, the form of academic guidance has changed from general management of basic studies to a service model that meets the actual needs of students and promotes all-round development. The model of student affairs work in higher education institutions has also changed from management-oriented to service-oriented and development-oriented, and academic counselling is no longer limited to academic problems but also includes students' mental health and career planning.

Regarding the construction and practice of the academic advising system. Cai Hefei and Yu Xiulan (2022) have focused on the three levels of academic guidance: theoretical significance and practical problems and breakthroughs, and have thus put forward the construction of an indigenous theoretical system. Wang Ying and Wang Xiaoyu (2016) have found that the guidance of mentors can help students improve their grades, better adapt to school life, and set higher goals for the future in some cases. According to the data in the academic analysis report of our university, our students still need to strengthen their pre-class preview, after-class review and in-class note-taking. Based on the study of academic counselling in China, scholars have put forward many proposals, such as organizing academic counselling courses, establishing academic counselling centers and building undergraduate tutorial systems, but only a few of these have been implemented in practice (Zhou Jinghui, 2014). In recent years, more and more higher education institutions have begun to pay attention to academic counselling and have established special departments to carry out the work of academic counselling. Although there are some differences in the names of these organisations, they generally have the same functions and purposes. According to the "Introduction to the Work of Academic Advisors in the New Era (2022)" published by the Education Working Committee of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China and other institutions, academic advisors are responsible for all kinds of tasks in academic guidance work, and their professional skills and work habits directly affect the quality of students' academic guidance.

Regarding the background and connotation of talent allocation and cultivation. Chinese higher education institutions have long studied the models of talent classification and development at the macro level. Shi Qiheng and Kang Min (2017) believe that the construction of a classification system can motivate higher education institutions to build school autonomy. Jin Xin (2012) put forward the construction of a national system, set up an all-weather observation station and organised special training. In short, the above studies have offered theoretical and practical support for the idea of "Classification for Excellence, Diversified Paths to Success" at the level of talent cultivation.

2.2 Current Research Status Abroad

Tao Min (2012) thinks that academic advising in American higher education has gone through three stages and has formed two main models: the diagnostic model and the developmental model. Xia Fengqin and Liu Qing (2020) have pointed out that since the founding of Harvard College in 1636, many types of models for academic guidance have also been developed. As shown in the above studies, the trend in the development of international academic advisory models is to move from passive problem-solving to active promotion of development, and to change from general guidance to personalised and differentiated guidance. Based on the above, it can be concluded that academic counselling should not be carried out alone but is part of the student services system; therefore, it needs to be coordinated with other departments.

2.3 Summary of Domestic and Foreign Research and Research Gaps

The focus and ideas of the domestic and foreign studies are in agreement. Both believe that the foundation of school counselling should be student-centredness. Sun Sun (2017) put forward the idea of "student-centredness" in the construction of academic advisory systems for higher education institutions, and Yang and others (2024) have shown that a student-development-oriented advisory model can promote the all-round development of students. Second, the goal of the guidance provided by Chinese and foreign scholars is also individualisation and specificity. Rao Meijuan and Wang Fazhou (2025) have put forward the idea of classified and tiered guidance, and Khader et al. (2025) have developed an artificial intelligence-driven system for personalised student assistance. Recently, both at home and abroad, the study of career planning and guidance has begun to be combined. Zhu Zhongmin (2017) has studied the contents of academic guidance and career planning in career education, and Verma and others (2025) have employed data mining and machine learning to construct predictive models for career guidance. The above will help the students know what they want to learn and be prepared for all sorts of work in life earlier.

In brief:

- a. The "student-centred" and developmental ideas of academic guidance have been widely accepted around the world, and they focus on the subjectivity and all-round development of students.
- b. Domestic academic counselling has laid a certain practical foundation for system construction, developed the tutorial system and the role of academic counsellors, and has begun to explore the application of big data and AI technology in personalised counselling.
- c. Foreign scholars have been conducting more research on artificial intelligence, and now it is being used to provide personalised advice and other intelligent services for people's career development.
- d. The general direction of the academic guidance proposed by the idea of "Classification for Excellence, Diversified Paths to Success" has been given, but how to implement classified and tiered policy introduction in various circumstances precisely remains to be determined.
- e. Academic involution is a new problem that has drawn the attention of scholars abroad, so we need to pay more attention to the mental health and healthy development of students.

Although there are many similarities in the research of academic advising in China and abroad, there are still some deficiencies in practical depth and theoretical system construction that are worth studying and learning from.

- a. There has been little research on how to apply the theoretical system in practice. Many general discussions have taken place so far on the concept of "Classification for Excellence", but there has been a lack of research on how to implement it systematically in specific situations and how to build working models, evaluation systems and differentiated guidance plans for different groups of students.
- b. Research on the Ethics and Applications of Deep Integration of AI Technology in Academic Counselling is scarce. AI has many applications, but there are still deficiencies in the theoretical study and practical verification of serious problems such as the protection of data privacy, algorithmic bias and how to balance the relationship between AI assistance and human advice.
- c. The Polished Implementation Methods for Classified and Tiered Counselling are not yet known. Although there have been many studies on the macro level of classified talent cultivation in China, how to refine these macro classification concepts into specific content, methods and evaluation systems for academic advising to form differentiated guidance schemes for different types of students is still a problem that needs to be solved in the future.
- d. Enrichment of the Theoretical System for Academic Advising in China. Based on overseas experience, how to integrate the strengths of domestic ideological and political education with the academic advisor system in building an indigenous theoretical system for academic guidance, and what theoretical framework with Chinese characteristics can be formed to meet the development needs of the times are still problems that need to be continuously addressed.

3. Current Situation of Academic Advising for College Students

In 2009, academic counselling was officially introduced in China's higher education institutions, and Tsinghua University was the first to establish an academic counselling office in the country, the

Student Learning and Development Guidance Centre. In April 2014, the Ministry of Education issued the "Vocational Ability Standards for Academic Advisors in Higher Education Institutions (Provisional)". Among the nine areas of vocational ability for academic advisors, academic advising was listed as a separate module, so professionalisation and vocationalisation of academic advising in line with national education policies are required.

Some results have been obtained in the field of academic counselling at home, but problems still exist, such as a lack of implementation, only one type of guidance, and no tiered or classified system. Based on the method of point-line-plane analysis, this paper will offer more specific information on the learning conditions of students and propose a tiered guidance system for academic development in higher education institutions according to departments. Based on the review of literature and practical experience, a general-purpose operating system for the academic guidance of college students has not yet been developed, and various styles in concepts, methods and principles for academic guidance have been developed by different higher education institutions. Based on my own experience, I have formed some personal views on the academic guidance of college students at higher education institutions.

4. Reflections and Suggestions Based on the Concept of "Classification for Excellence, Diverse Paths to Success"

4.1 Updating and Improving College Students' Learning Concepts and Promoting New Learning Methods

Students' concept of learning is their intuitive understanding of knowledge, learning phenomena and the experiences gained by individual students; this concept is gradually formed through daily learning activities, classroom teaching and the sociocultural environment. Some students think that they are studying only because they have to, so they do not study hard. Therefore, academic counselling in higher education institutions can serve some educational purposes for the problem of why students study.

According to a survey, 38% of the students believe that "learning is for the college entrance examination; we will consider what to do later when that time comes", and 44.7% think that "we can bear some hardship now, and after being admitted to college, we will be free". Therefore, it can be seen from the above data that the main reason many students want to study is to get good grades in the college entrance examination. The reasons students learn affect their desire to learn, motivation and ways of studying; therefore, the main task of academic counselling in colleges and universities is to help students identify this problem. Since all the children are different, we should not give the same answer to everyone. The general direction will be the same, but we need to help the students set some specific goals in that general direction and gradually focus their efforts.

We need to help the students find their own direction and strive to achieve it; we should help them feel that they are responsible for their own growth and provide services and support for their continuous learning. Therefore, the students are the subjects of learning, as well as the implementers and beneficiaries of learning. Help the students obtain this idea, and we will be able to teach them independently; thus, we can achieve double the results with half the effort. Most students do not know how learning will affect their lives in the long run before attending university, and some are even uncertain about what role the specific knowledge they are learning now will play in their future careers. It is the urgent task of academic guidance to help students realise that their learning ability is their own foundation and that all the specific knowledge they are learning now will surely benefit their future careers.

4.2 Spotlighting Innovative Learning Education

Recently, innovative education has attracted the attention of more and more people in higher education, and many universities have begun to establish schools for innovative education. In the work of academic counselling, we need to promote new types of study that can help students learn better in a new way. In practice, universities are more open, students have more learning autonomy, and institutions have more platforms and resources; thus, it is also very suitable to offer innovative learning education during the university years. Higher education institutions need to free up more time and allocate more funds for building platforms and introducing incentive policies to motivate both teachers and students to take part in the spirit of innovation. Teachers need to have more time for lesson preparation and learn to use other teaching materials. New ideas are not only what students need to

learn; they are also how to apply what one has learned in daily life for exploration, integration and experience.

4.3 Guiding the Majority of Students to Form Reading Habits

According to the results of the 19th National Reading Survey in China, 2021 saw that the average number of printed books read per adult in China was 4.76. If we carry out a survey on the current amount of extracurricular book reading among college students, it will probably not be much higher than this. On the one hand, students have not developed the habit of reading; on the other hand, reading is now the interest of only a few people, and there is a serious lack of platforms for reading exchange and guidance. Reading is a very economical way to achieve lifelong learning and continuous learning. To improve the quality of talent education further, we need to promote high-quality, continuous and lifelong learning, and reading is one of the best ways to achieve this goal. All Positions, such as administrators, teachers and academic advisors, need to promote a reading culture. Based on the above, we need to foster a reading culture for students all-roundly, make reading a trend among young people in higher education institutions, cultivate a good habit that will benefit them in all aspects of life, and bring long-term benefits to the country and society.

4.4 Implementing Career Planning Education

Career Planning Education is a good model that can serve as the basis for the academic guidance provided by higher education institutions. It can encourage students to continue studying in college and set some short-term and long-term goals for their college life. After graduation, it will still help the students maintain good study habits and plan for their future careers. Career planning education is, in fact, an expression of the idea of "classification for excellence"; many people have different plans and different focuses, so individual plans that are in line with one's own qualities are encouraged. Career planning pays more attention to the individuality of students, helps them get to know themselves better, and realizes that everyone is different. Clear and reasonable career planning should be made for the future development of college students. The current scale of career planning education in universities is small, and many college students lack good career planning skills. However, the spread of career planning education will continue to be slow. In the course of academic guidance, it is still necessary to carry out the ideas of career planning education, promote students' awareness of academic and personal growth, and integrate career planning education into academic guidance.

4.5 Continuously Strengthening the Student Growth-Oriented Educational Concept

Following the pattern of three-wide education, we need to continue to strengthen the student-centered educational concept. In addition to academic advisors and course teachers, all employees of teaching and management staff in higher education institutions should have this educational concept, as "talent cultivation" and "moral education through schooling" are the basic tasks of higher education institutions. If the institutions fail to cultivate talent and do not put the students at the centre of the system and policies, then the direction will have to be changed. The tasks of students in higher education institutions are to learn and to grow; therefore, serving their learning and growth is a very important educational task for us. To be "student growth-oriented", all departments of the higher education institution need to agree on this common goal and work together. Therefore, we need to increase the weight given to the student-centered idea at the top of higher education institutions and build a system and issue policies to integrate this idea into the assessment of all departments. The student growth-oriented concept does not mean to please the students or ignore the basic task of "nurturing virtue through education". Therefore, we need to be more concerned about the moral qualities and personality development of the students, pay attention to their long-term growth, and meet their individual needs.

4.6 Guide students to be able to use AI tools for study independently

The Form of organisation for academic guidance in higher education institutions is changing from one-size-fits-all to personalised and precise. Iteration in artificial intelligence is a way to achieve the above change. Teaching young children will help them learn to use artificial intelligence as a "cognitive aid" and a "study companion"; older students are more academically focused and interested in research, so they will learn to use AI to improve the efficiency of their studies, and students with particular interests in application and career fields will aim to gain practical skills and professional abilities

through learning. Higher education institutions should move away from the traditional division of functions for academic guidance and systematically integrate the cultivation of AI literacy into the main content system of academic guidance. Institutions should modify the triadic interactive relationship of "teachers, machines and students" so that technology serves educational goals and does not harm the essence of education. Institutions should issue rules to prevent academic misconduct and other educational problems arising from the misuse of technology. Academic guidance can help students learn to use new technologies for better thinking, but it should not be used to avoid thinking.

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