The Challenges and Solutions of Criminal Law Teaching Reform in Higher Education Institutions under the Background of New Liberal Arts

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ABSTRACT
Based on the background of new liberal arts construction, this paper is theoretically explored in four dimensions based on the realistic dilemma of criminal law teaching reform in colleges and universities. The research delves deep into the intrinsic disadvantages of traditional criminal law teaching mode in terms closed knowledge structure, rigid method orientation and singular evaluation mechanism, and comprehensively expounds the structural tension between it and the requirement of compound talents with interdisciplinary background under rule of law. The subjective, closed and normative dogma needs to be highly adaptable, however, traditional legal thinking is difficult to adapt to the complexity of new crimes in information age, which caused the severe alienation of legal thinking and social governance practice. In teaching innovation, judicial justice is crucial for preservative. Thus, this paper proposes a value rationality-centered reform path from three aspects: breaking the barriers among disciplines, changing the paradigm of knowledge-filled instillation to competency-based teaching and establishing a diversified open classroom system including driving factors such as curriculum module integration, digital technology empowerment and teacher-student roles reshaping. The deepening reform in the teaching of criminal law is not only the requirement to improve educational connotation, but also the way to cope with national governance modernization and train top-notch innovative legal talents, and finally provide a theoretical foundation or direction orientation for promoting the construction of China's characteristic legal education system and extensively support a high-quality sustainable development of legal education.

Keywords: *New liberal arts construction, Criminal law teaching, Paradigm transformation, Value rationality, System reconstruction.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education in China is currently experiencing the vital transitional phase from scale expansion to connotation development, and the put forward of "new liberal arts" construction marks the deep adjustment of discipline ecology [1]. Under this grand background, law education, as the main position of cultivating talents under the rule of law, is facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges. Criminal jurisprudence, as the core cornerstone of the legal system, bears the basic function of punishing crimes, and is more related to the bottom line logic of human rights protection and modernization of state governance. Its teaching quality is directly related to the improvement of national criminal judicial ability [2]. Looking at the current situation of criminal law teaching in colleges and universities, there is a significant structural tension between the traditional closed knowledge transfer model and the interdisciplinary and compound demand for rule of law talents in the new era [3]. Criminal law norms are highly professional and technical, and the long-term dogmatic system tends to be internally self-consistent logical deduction. Criminal behavior in social reality is becoming more and more complicated and intelligent, which requires legal persons to have cross-disciplinary cognitive vision and comprehensive judgment ability [4]. The existing research mostly focuses on the micro-discussion of specific teaching skills or the quantitative statistics of empirical data, but rarely analyzes the internal logical dilemma of criminal

law knowledge system from the perspective of epistemology, ignoring the fundamental change of educational philosophy [5].

By combing the spiritual essence of the new liberal arts construction, this paper analyzes the interactive relationship between it and the traditional knowledge prospect of criminal law education, and reveals the deep contradiction of teaching reform in concept renewal, system reconstruction and evaluation turn. The research attempts to explore how criminal law can break the discipline barrier and realize the knowledge integration with social science and even natural science from the legal implication. On this basis, this paper will outline a reform path based on open system view and value rationality orientation, and demonstrate how to meet the new challenges of rule of law practice by reshaping knowledge structure. This is a deep return to the law of legal education, and it is also an inevitable choice to respond to the proposition of the times and cultivate outstanding legal talents to meet the needs of future social governance.

2. NEW LIBERAL ARTS CONSTRUCTION AND KNOWLEDGE PROSPECT OF CRIMINAL LAW EDUCATION

The core of the construction of new liberal arts lies in breaking the barriers of disciplines and promoting the innovation and integration of knowledge production methods. This macro background requires that the teaching of criminal law should not only be satisfied with the analysis of the established doctrine text, but also build a dynamic and open knowledge ecosystem [6]. From the perspective of new liberal arts, the boundary of criminal law knowledge should be redefined. It is no longer just a self-deduction of normative logic, but a comprehensive field deeply embedded with sociology, psychology, information technology and other disciplines.

The knowledge prospect of criminal law education needs to change from “single norm theory” to “multiple compound theory” This means that in the teaching content, in addition to consolidating the logical foundation of substantive law, we should also introduce frontier topics such as social effect evaluation of criminal policy, sociological analysis of criminal reasons and ethical regulation of digital technology [7]. The knowledge attribute of criminal law has undergone a qualitative leap. It has changed from purely technical rational operation to comprehensive governance wisdom that takes into account both value rationality and social responsibility. The reconstruction of this knowledge picture aims to solve the pain point of the disconnection between knowledge and reality in traditional teaching, so that students can understand the social mechanism and humanistic care behind the norms while mastering the normative tools.

3. THE INHERENT LIMITATION AND TENSION OF CRIMINAL LAW TEACHING MODE

At present, the teaching of criminal law in colleges and universities has encountered deep structural obstacles in the process of paradigm transformation, which first stems from the violent dislocation between the existing knowledge structure and the evolution of social reality crime forms. The traditional criminal law curriculum system is highly dependent on the normative deduction of formal logic, which simplifies complex criminal acts into the matching of static constituent elements, ignoring the profound social motivation behind the crime and the multi-interest game. This single-dimensional knowledge supply model makes the teaching content unable to cover the interdisciplinary cognitive vision required by new complex forms such as cyber crime in the information age, which leads to the fact that students have mastered abstract legal concepts, but lack substantive explanatory ability and predictive function when facing specific situations. As the transmitter of knowledge, teachers are used to the logical deduction of self-reference in the closed theoretical loop, while students passively accept this de-contextualized normative indoctrination. Together, the two maintain a seemingly rigorous but rigid order of knowledge production, which seems to be stretched in the face of dynamically changing practice of rule of law [8]. This teaching mode strengthens the dogmatism tendency in methodology and inhibits the generation and development of students’ critical thinking. Teachers tend to provide standard legal conclusions in the teaching process, while students are committed to finding the answer template that meets expectations. This two-way catering relationship hinders the possibility of students’ independent examination of legal value, which makes criminal law education become a simple technical exercise and loses its intellectual enlightenment.

To illustrate the core contradiction of the current teaching model, this paper develops a structural tension model as illustrated in “Figure 1”. This model reveals the essential difference between the traditional teaching path and the requirements of the new liberal arts environment, and shows the incompatibility between the two sides in goal positioning and operation logic.

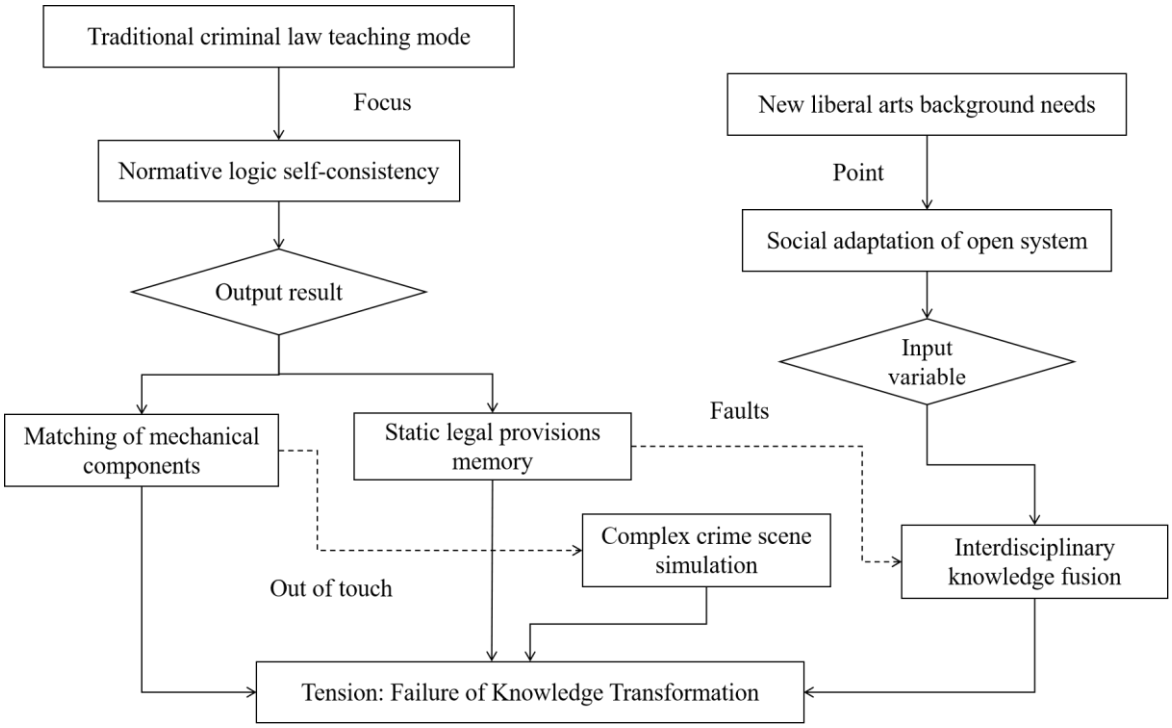


Figure 1 Structural tension model between traditional criminal law teaching mode and new liberal arts demand.

At present, the evaluation system mainly takes the test scores as a single indicator, and tends to examine students' ability to remember and reproduce standard answers, rather than their ability to analyze and solve legal problems [9]. This evaluation orientation forces both teachers and students to devote limited teaching resources to memorizing established laws and regulations, thus occupying the time space for critical thinking training and practical skills training. When the evaluation standard fails to reflect the requirements of comprehensive literacy emphasized by the new liberal arts, the teaching reform loses its internal dynamic mechanism, which eventually leads to the low-level repetition cycle of criminal law education. Therefore, we must start from the bottom logic of system design, break the evaluation inertia of the score theory, and establish a multi-dimensional evaluation system that can truly reflect students’ practical ability of rule of law and innovative thinking, otherwise any technical repair cannot fundamentally resolve the deep tension in the teaching process.

4. JURISPRUDENTIAL IMPLICATION AND VALUE TURN OF TEACHING REFORM

The entry point of discussing the reform of criminal law teaching must be to realize that the essential transformation is in its legal implication, and we have to transcend the plane on which technical problems are discussed so that we can put forward a re-examination of what is ultimately being cultivated under rule of law, as well as why talent has such value. The setting of teaching objectives must be transformed from one-way indoctrination of normative knowledge to systematic cultivation of comprehensive literacy. The reform under the background of new liberal arts requires the establishment of an educational orientation. This educational orientation takes competence as the core, and organically integrates logical thinking training, ethical value judgment and interdisciplinary analysis ability into the core curriculum system. In this way, criminal law education can return to its essential attribute, that is, to cultivate outstanding legal talents with

independent personality, critical spirit and social responsibility.

As a scientific and humanistic discipline, the teaching of criminal law should not be limited to the technical operation process of conviction and sentencing, but should deeply explore the pursuit of justice behind the penalty power, the bottom line of human rights protection and the substantive rationality of criminal policy [10]. This means that teachers should actively guide students to think about the political ethics and social effects behind the norms in the teaching process, so as to avoid falling into the narrow position of only article theory, and ensure that the application of the law not only conforms to logical rigor but also contains humanistic temperature. The breaking of discipline barriers is itself an important value embodiment of criminal law education. By introducing sociology, economics, psychology and other external perspectives, criminal law teaching can more accurately understand the generation mechanism and social roots of crime, and then cultivate students' ability to measure interests and optimize the system in the conflict of multiple values. This value turn is a profound revision of the disadvantages of traditional law education, and it is also an important part of constructing the theoretical system of law with China characteristics.

5. OPEN RECONSTRUCTION OF THE TEACHING SYSTEM OF CRIMINAL LAW

Thus, the reconstruction of criminal law teaching system is not only the simple repair updating for current systems but comprehensive paradigm reconstruction under new liberal arts conception Its core is to break the closed disciplinary boundaries and build an open ecosystem with multiple interactions to meet the complex social governance needs. In this systematic project, the modular integration of course content is the basic link, which requires breaking through the traditional boundaries of disciplines and organically integrating the teaching of substantive law with frontier topics such as criminal policy, sociology of crime and information ethics. Through such integration, a cluster of knowledge modules that can dynamically respond to social changes can be formed, and knowledge transfer is no longer limited to static law memorization. The technical empowerment mechanism of teaching scenes is also indispensable. By introducing virtual simulation technology to simulate the complex confrontation process between cybercrime scene and court trial, students can experience the uncertainty of legal application in a safe and controllable digital environment, thus effectively making up for the fatal shortcomings of traditional theoretical classroom divorced from practical scenes. The interactive transformation of teachers and students' roles is the source of system vitality. Teachers should be transformed into learning guides, build academic communities with students, stimulate students' potential through discussion and debate teaching, and promote equal dialogue between teaching and learning.

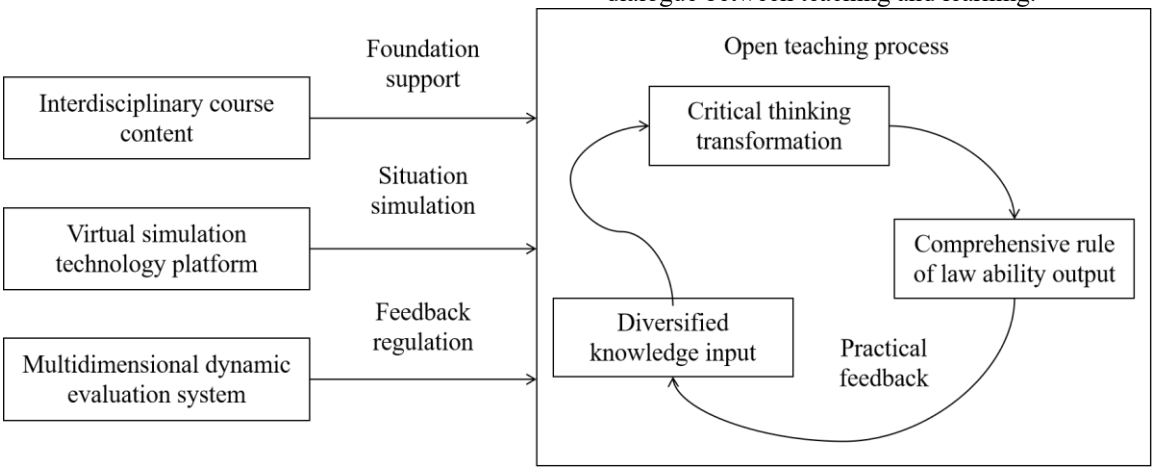


Figure 2 Operation model of open teaching system of criminal law under the background of new liberal arts

The model underpins the core teaching transformation process in three foundational pillars, as depicted in “Figure 2”. The synergy of the three makes the teaching system no longer a one-way linear knowledge transfer, but a closed-loop structure with self-diagnosis and repair functions, which can constantly adjust the internal configuration and teaching strategies according to the changes of external judicial practice. This system also emphasizes the docking with the deep resources of judicial organs and industry organizations, transforming real cases into dynamic teaching resource libraries, ensuring that the teaching content is always at the forefront of evolution and avoiding the theory lagging behind practice. Through this structural reconstruction, criminal law education can effectively overcome the tendency of single dogmatism, solve the fundamental contradiction between knowledge supply and practical demand, and finally cultivate compound talents under the rule of law who are proficient in normative logic and have social insight.

6. CONCLUSION

Under the background of new liberal arts, teaching reform of criminal law is an overall project of renewing educational ideas, reorganizing knowledge system and innovating institutional mechanism. Its core mission is to solve the structural contradiction of traditional teaching mode. The common problems in current criminal law teaching, such as closed knowledge structure, method-oriented dogma and single evaluation mechanism, essentially reflect the deep mismatch between static normative logic and dynamic social reality. To really get out of this dilemma, we must not only rely on the superficial repair of teaching technology, but also return to the legal implication of education, establish the educational goal of paying equal attention to value rationality and technical rationality, and ensure that the cultivation of legal person's thinking is both rigorous and inclusive. By reconstructing the open teaching system, actively introducing interdisciplinary vision into the classroom, using digital technology to simulate the real rule of law scene, and reshaping the equal and interactive relationship between teachers and students, students' comprehensive legal literacy and ability to solve practical problems can be significantly improved.

Such reform has a far-reaching significance beyond the classroom itself, directly affecting the quality as a whole of cultivating rule-of-law talents in China and concerning the country’s comprehensive long-term development. Faced with the increasingly complex forms of intelligent crime and the urgent need for modernization of state governance, criminal law education must jump out of the framework of simple article interpretation and move towards the cultivation of comprehensive governance wisdom that integrates the vision of social science. Only in this way can we cultivate outstanding legal talents with independent critical spirit, environmental adaptability and innovative thinking, so that they can not only adhere to the standard bottom line of justice in future judicial practice, but also flexibly cope with the changes brought about by social changes. Therefore, continuing to promote the deep-seated reform in the teaching of criminal law is a concrete manifestation of implementing the fundamental task of educating people by virtue, and it is also an inevitable requirement for building a legal discourse system with China characteristics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors acknowledge the Project Source: General Project of the 2024 University-Level Teaching Research and Reform Program at Lanzhou Technology and Business Colloge. : Application Research of Blended Teaching Method in 《Criminal Law》 Course Teaching under the Background of New Liberal Arts Construction (Project ID: LGSJG202406)

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