

Cultivating Applied Type of "New People in the Rule-of-Law Era" - Exploration and Practice Based on the Training Path of Talents Ruled by Law

Nan Jiang*

Law Department, Sanda University, Shanghai, China

**Corresponding Author*

Abstract: Against the backdrop of advancing law-based national governance, this paper reframes how higher education can cultivate practice-oriented legal talents who fit the "New People in the Rule-of-Law Era." It clarifies connotations and competence profiles, and proposes a pathway centered on solid theoretical grounding, cross-disciplinary integration, immersive practice, and capacity elevation. Through curriculum reconfiguration, diversified pedagogies, strengthened experiential modules, and rule-of-law literacy enhancement, the study outlines an implementable, evaluation-aware training model suited to contemporary governance needs.

Keywords: New Person in the Era of Rule-of-Law; Applied Talents of Rule-of-Law; Education of Rule-of-Law; Accomplishment of Rule-of-Law; Cultivation of talents of Rule-of-Law.

1. Introduction

China's comprehensive modernization has placed the rule-of-law at the heart of governance. Since the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee in 2014 first articulated the strategic direction of building a law-based China, the demand for high-quality legal talents has intensified. Yet persistent issues—fragile theory–practice linkage, imbalanced curricula, and under powered experiential teaching—undermine outcomes. This paper therefore addresses how to shape "New People in the Rule-of-Law Era," i.e., professionals who internalize rule-of-law belief, think legally, perform competently, and act responsibly. It offers a systematized pathway for cultivating applied legal talents in universities as a reference for reform.

2. Connotation and Characteristics of Applied Type of "New People in the Rule-of-Law Era"

The "new person in the era of rule-of-law" refers to the high quality talents of rule-of-law with firm belief, mature thinking, outstanding ability and strong sense of social responsibility. Its core features include:

2.1 Firm Belief in the Rule-of-Law

A robust belief in the rule-of-law anchors professional identity and guides behavior. Individuals are expected to respect law intrinsically, uphold legal authority, and adopt law as the baseline for social conduct. As policy blueprints on building a law-based society emphasize, only by sustaining such belief can individuals defend legal boundaries in complex contexts and help diffuse rule-of-law values. [1]

2.2 Mature Legal Thinking

Legal thinking denotes the capacity to diagnose problems via legal logic, principles, and procedures. Beyond knowing provisions, it involves grasping legal spirit and due process. Mature legal thinking prioritizes lawful means to mediate conflicts and pursue fairness and justice - an essential competence for youth in the new era. [2]

2.3 Outstanding Legal Capacity

Legal competence translates knowledge into performance across tasks such as drafting, counseling, and aid, alongside integrative preparation for qualification examinations. Excellence lies not merely in doctrinal mastery but in deep practice comprehension and agile application. Legal education should thus encourage transforming "knowing" into "doing," bridging theory with the demands of

real cases and workplaces.

2.4 Dual Cultivation of Morality and Law

The combination of morality and law means that an individual should not only have professional knowledge of law, but also attach importance to the improvement of moral and humanistic qualities. The rule-of-law is not only the restriction of law, but also the guidance of morality. The combination of morality and law means that the individual should abide by the law and adhere to the moral bottom line, so as to achieve the unity of knowledge and practice. This dual emphasis safeguards overall advancement of law-based governance.

2.5 Integration of Knowledge and Practice

The unity of knowing and doing refers to the combination of theory and practice and the application of knowledge to practical work. In the era of rule-of-law, the newcomers should not only have a solid legal theoretical basis, but also be able to explore and innovate in practice and solve practical problems. [3] As the headmaster of Fu Zi Tang emphasized at the 2023 graduation ceremony, the unity of knowledge and practice is not only the core of the spirit, but also an important path for the growth of youth in the new era.

2.6 Serving the Society

Serving society is the end goal. The rule-of-law is personal ethos and a cornerstone of social progress. New-generation professionals should shoulder public responsibility, contribute to rule-of-law construction, and advance equity and justice.

3. Current Situation and Problem Analysis of Legal Education in Colleges and Universities

3.1 Status Overview

Legal education has gained traction within universities and is often embedded in broader civic and ideological curricula. Nevertheless, persistent bottlenecks—curricular fragmentation, traditionalist pedagogies, and uneven faculty practice exposure—limit responsiveness to emerging demands.

3.2 Main Problems

3.2.1 Imperfect curriculum system and weak

practice teaching

Course offerings (e.g., constitutional, criminal, civil law) remain theory-heavy with limited practice fusion. Teacher-centered lecturing dominates, curbing engagement and interactive problem-solving. Meanwhile, structured practice training remains insufficient relative to the competency profile needed in high-stakes professional examinations and early career roles. It requires a higher level of legal practice ability, but there is a lack of systematic legal practice training in university curricula, resulting in students facing greater difficulties in preparing for the examination and in actual work.

3.2.2 Single teaching methods and lack of innovation

The teaching mode of rule-of-law education in colleges and universities is more traditional, which adopts the mode of "teacher teaching + student listening". This kind of teaching method is difficult to stimulate students' interest in learning, and also difficult to cultivate students' legal thinking and practical ability. [4] For example, in some colleges and universities, such as "Legal Writing", "Legal Consulting Practice" and other courses, still focus on theoretical explanation.

3.2.3 Insufficient teachers and lack of "double-qualified" teachers

The teaching staff of the rule-of-law education in colleges and universities is generally insufficient, especially the "double-qualified" teachers with legal practice experience. Many law teachers in colleges and universities mainly come from colleges and universities or research institutions, and lack work experience in courts, procuratorates, law firms and other practical departments. In addition, because the university teacher's scientific research task is arduous, participates in the legal practice teaching the enthusiasm not to be high, causes the teaching effect not to be good.

3.2.4 Blurred objectives and disconnection from social needs

Some universities subsume rule-of-law education under generic civic education rather than a distinct professional cultivation track. Equating rule-of-law education with legal knowledge transfer alone sidelines the development of thinking, skills, and dispositions, creating friction with labor market expectations.

3.2.5 Lack of systematization and coherence in

rule-of-law education

The rule-of-law education in colleges and universities is lack of systematicness and coherence, the curriculum is scattered and lack of overall planning. For example, some colleges and universities in the "Law Foundation" course only one-third of the book content, the rest is occupied by other ideological and political content, resulting in the teaching of legal knowledge is not systematic. In addition, the students of different grades and different majors have high repetition rate, lack of pertinence and gradation, and can not meet the needs of different groups of students.

4. Construction of the Cultivation Pathway for Applied "New People in the Era of Rule-of-Law"

4.1 Optimize Curriculum System and Build a Compound Training Model for Legal Talents

Universities should focus on the training goal of "new people in the era of rule-of-law", systematically construct curriculum system, strengthen the combination of legal basis and practical ability, and promote the training of compound talents of rule-of-law. Universities shall adhere to the principles of "thick foundation, wide caliber, emphasis on practice and strong ability", and build a system for fostering legal talents.

4.1.1 Four - pillar curriculum architecture

(1) Thick foundation: strengthen the construction of core courses (e.g., constitutional, criminal, civil law), and consolidate the theoretical foundation of students' law. For example, Tsinghua University Law School has introduced "simulated legislation" and "simulated amendment of constitution" in the course of "Constitution Law" to enhance students' legal thinking ability. (2) Broad scope: expand the curriculum system of "law plus", such as "law plus computer/AI", "law plus finance", "law plus foreign language", etc., and enable students to navigate complex socio-technical issues. For example, China University of Political Science and Law (CUPL) offers interdisciplinary courses such as "Law and Artificial Intelligence" and "Law and Finance" to enhance students' interdisciplinary skills. (3) Laying stress on practice: adding courses on

legal practice, such as the Writing of Legal Instruments, Legal Consultation Practice and Legal Aid Practice, etc. to enhance students' ability to operate legal practice. For example, the Shanghai Sanda University has set up "legal clinics" to improve students' legal practice ability through simulated legal services. (4) Capability uplift: Provide staged, competency-mapped preparation for professional qualifications, aligned with real task demands rather than rote coverage.

4.1.2 Promoting the integration and updating of curriculum contents

Infuse rule-of-law beliefs, constitutionalism, and core values into courses through cases and reflective tasks; emphasize life-long learning mindsets and post-graduation adaptability. Career development services (planning, internships, mentoring) should scaffold transitions to employment. East China University of Political Science and Law (ECUPL) has established the Legal Career Development Center to provide students with career planning, internship recommendation, career guidance and other services to enhance their employment competitiveness. [5]

4.2 Innovate Teaching Methods and Improve Effectiveness

Colleges and universities should adopt diversified teaching methods to enhance students' interest and participation in learning and improve teaching results. Shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered strategies, consistent with national guidance, to elevate participation and learning gains.

4.2.1 Active learning suite

Through the "moot court", "legal clinic", "legal aid center" and other platforms to enhance students' legal practice ability. For example, the Peking University School of Law sets up "mock courts" where students improve their legal practice through mock trials, legal writing, legal advice and other activities.

Encourage students to participate in case analysis, role play, debate and other interactive teaching activities to enhance legal thinking and practical ability. For example, the School of Law at Tsinghua University has a "Law Clinic" program in which students improve their legal practice by participating in real legal advice.

4.2.2 Academic-practice dual-background faculty

Invite experienced judges, prosecutors, and attorneys as adjuncts; encourage faculty to engage in practice through short-term secondments or rotation mechanisms, thereby improving the authenticity and pertinence of instruction.

4.3 Strengthen Experiential Teaching and Enhance Practice Ability

Colleges and universities should strengthen practical teaching through a variety of ways to enhance the legal practice of students to better meet social needs. According to the Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Strengthening the Construction of Practical Teaching System in Colleges and Universities, colleges and universities should incorporate experiential modules into the curriculum architecture as credit-bearing components. Build practice platforms (e.g., trial simulations, clinical lawyering, community legal services) where students can apply knowledge, receive feedback, and iterate.

4.3.1 Diversified platforms

Practice platforms such as "moot court", "legal clinic" and "legal aid center" shall be built to allow students to exercise their legal practice ability in real or simulated environment. For example, the Shanghai Sanda University set up a "Student Legal Aid Center" to provide legal advice and assistance services to all teachers and students of the University as well as community residents and enhance students' legal practice ability.

Carry out mock trials, legal document writing, legal consulting and other practical activities to improve students' legal practice operation ability. For example, the School of Law at Tsinghua University has a "Law Clinic" program in which students improve their legal practice by participating in real legal advice.

4.3.2 Collaborative ecosystems

Co-build internship bases with judicial organs, law firms, and enterprises; jointly design practice syllabi; implement co-supervision and outcome assessments that track skill acquisition and employability growth. CUPL, for example, has partnered with law firms in Beijing to set up "law internship bases" to provide internship opportunities.

Through "the whole process educates the human cooperation" the mechanism, promotes student's legal practice ability and the employment competitive power. For example,

ECUPL cooperated with Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Justice to launch the "Joint Training Program for Legal Talents" to enhance students' legal practice ability.

Through the typical case teaching, the rule-of-law person deeds study and so on way, strengthens student's rule-of-law approval feeling. For example, Fudan University, in the course of "Introduction to the Thoughts on the Rule-of-Law", enhances students' belief in the rule-of-law by narrating the deeds of people involved in the rule-of-law.

It emphasizes the combination of learning, thinking and practice, and the unity of knowledge, faith and action, so as to enhance students' legal practice ability.

4.4 Enhance Rule-of-Law Literacy and Responsibility

Design thematic activities—rule-of-law culture weeks, case-based civic sessions, and experiential outreach—to strengthen recognition of the rule-of-law and social responsibility. Integrate professional ethics explicitly via assessment tasks and field reflections, reinforcing internalization.

4.4.1 Strengthening the education of belief in the rule-of-law

Through typical case teaching and learning of deeds of people under the rule-of-law, students' recognition of the rule-of-law can be enhanced.

4.4.2 Launching cultural activities on the rule-of-law

Create an atmosphere of rule-of-law culture, set up rule-of-law bulletin boards, rule-of-law lectures, rule-of-law theme class. For example, Peking University Law School has established the "rule-of-law Culture Month" to promote students' awareness of the rule-of-law through activities such as lectures, exhibitions and debates on the rule-of-law.

Carry out activities such as "rule-of-law in classroom", "rule-of-law in dormitory" and "rule-of-law in community" to enhance students' awareness of rule-of-law. For example, China University of Political Science and Law carries out the activity of "Rule-of-Law in Class", which integrates rule-of-law education into daily teaching.

4.5 “Whole-Process Education” and Blended Teaching

Advance whole-process education through milestone mapping

(admission–practice–graduation), and leverage blended delivery (MOOCs, virtual simulation, smart classrooms) to enable flexible mastery and resource sharing. Build online learning platforms and virtual courtrooms to support scalable practice exposure.

4.5.1 Establishing a cooperation mechanism among schools, enterprises, places and institutes

Establish long-term cooperative relations with public security, procuratorate, law firms, enterprises and other entities to promote the integration of industry and education. For example, East China University of Political Science and Law cooperates with Shanghai Judicial Bureau and Bar Association to establish a "joint training base for legal talents" to enhance students' legal practice ability.

Enhance students' legal practice ability and employment competitiveness by jointly building practice bases, jointly carrying out legal practice training, organizing students to participate in legal aid and other means. For example, the School of Law at Tsinghua University cooperates with a number of law firms in Beijing to carry out the "Law Internship Base" program to enhance students' legal practice ability.

4.5.2 Promoting the "Internet plus Teaching" model

The sharing of teaching resources and teaching effects can be improved by using the technology of wisdom classroom, cloud platform and network courses. For example, the Peking University School of Law has developed the Law Online Learning Platform, which provides rich legal courses and resources to enhance students' learning experience.

Explore online and offline hybrid teaching, virtual simulation teaching and other new models to enhance students' learning experience and participation. For example, the China University of Political Science and Law has launched the "Virtual Courtroom" program to enhance students' legal practice ability through virtual simulation technology.

5. Countermeasures to Meet Practical Demands of "New People in the Rule-of-Law Era"

In order to systematically promote the training of "new people in the era of rule-of-law", universities and education authorities should

build a systematic and multi-level training system for talents under the rule-of-law. The following five specific strategies are put forward in order to provide operational path for the reform of legal education.

5.1 Top-Level Design and System Building

Embed rule-of-law education within institutional development plans; articulate its positioning in talent cultivation. Construct an outcome-oriented system that links curricular content, practice experiences, and assessment standards to the competencies required by law-based governance.

In accordance with the Several Opinions on Strengthening the Reform of Law Education in the New Era, universities shall adhere to the principles of "thick foundation, wide caliber, emphasis on practice and strong ability", and build a system for fostering legal talents. In addition, the reform also emphasizes the need to "strengthen legal education and enhance the quality of the rule-of-law for all people", which provides policy support for the top-level design of legal education.

5.1.1 Curriculum system optimization

Universities shall formulate a reasonable and scientific curriculum system for legal education, covering basic legal theories, legal practical skills, legal professional ethics, counseling for legal professional qualification examinations and other contents. For example, Tsinghua University Law School has introduced "simulated legislation" and "simulated amendment of constitution" in the course of "Constitution Law" to enhance students' legal thinking ability.

5.1.2 Interdisciplinary integration

Promote co-teaching and co-listing with data science, economics, sociology, and public management to foment compound capabilities suited to complex legal-service ecosystems.

5.1.3 Development of the evaluation mechanism

An evaluation mechanism for rule-of-law education shall be established to regularly evaluate the effect of rule-of-law education and ensure the quality and effect of education. For example, ECUPL has established the Legal Career Development Center to provide students with career planning, internship recommendation, career guidance and other services to enhance their employment competitiveness. [6]

5.2 Pedagogical Reform for Practicality and Effectiveness

Institutionalize active learning as the default: flipped designs for doctrinal courses; problem trails for skills courses; capstone clinics linking real or simulated cases to integrated assessment. [4]

5.2.1 Promotion of diversified teaching modes
Students shall be allowed to exercise their legal practice ability in real or simulated environment by "moot court", "legal clinic" and "legal aid center".

5.2.2 Construction of "double-qualified" teaching team

Engage experts with legal practice experience to participate in teaching, and enhance the practicality and pertinence of teaching.

5.2.3 Implementation of the teacher rotation system

Motivate teachers to take part in legal practice and improve their teaching ability and legal practice level.

5.3 Practice Platform Construction

Develop a multi-node ecosystem across campus, justice partners, and enterprises. Co-create syllabi for internships; align credits with verified competencies; operate "whole-chain" education mechanisms that track inputs (hours/tasks) and outputs (skills/artifacts/employability).

5.3.1 Construction of practice platforms

Establish practice platforms such as "moot court", "legal clinic" and "legal aid center" to allow students to exercise their legal practice ability in real or simulated environment.

5.3.2 Cooperation between schools and enterprises

By cooperating with public security organs, procuratorates, law firms, enterprises and other entities, jointly build internship bases and promote students to participate in legal practice.

5.3.3 Whole-process education mechanism

Through the mechanism of "whole-process education and cooperation", enhance students' legal practice ability and employment competitiveness.

5.4 Rule-of-Law Literacy Education

Integrate professional ethics, constitutional literacy, and civic responsibility into mandatory classes; run legal culture series

(billboards, salons, themed sessions); encourage participation in legal aid and volunteer services to strengthen public service orientation.

5.4.1 Curriculum design optimization

In courses such as the Legal Professional Ethics, help students master the legal professional ethics.

5.4.2 Carrying out legal culture activities

Create a legal culture atmosphere, and set up legal billboards, legal lectures, and legal theme class meetings.

5.4.3 Participation in social practice

Organize students to participate in legal aid, legal voluntary services and other activities to enhance students' sense of social responsibility. For example, carrying out the activity of "rule-of-law in Class", which integrates rule-of-law education into daily teaching.

5.5 Deeper Integration with Social Needs

Cooperate with local governments, bar associations, and industries to set up thematic modules on digital rule-of-law, cybercrime governance, and AI-law interactions, ensuring forward compatibility of training [7]. Promote information construction for continuous upgrading of teaching quality and reach.

5.5.1 Cooperation between local schools and colleges

Partner with local governments, industry associations, and enterprises to co-design and deliver legal education initiatives that strengthen students' civic responsibility and practical competence.

5.5.2 Cutting-edge curriculum

Focus on frontier areas in rule-of-law education—including the digital rule-of-law, cybercrime governance, and the AI-law nexus—to ensure the field remains current and forward-looking.

5.5.3 Promotion of information construction

Advance the digital transformation of legal education by leveraging information technologies to improve both efficiency and quality. Universities can build dedicated online platforms for rule-of-law education that curate rich resources and enable anytime-anywhere learning.

6. Conclusion

Cultivating applied "New People in the Rule-of-Law Era" requires a shift from knowledge transmission to competence

formation and value internalization. By reconfiguring curricula, modernizing pedagogy, expanding experiential learning, and strengthening rule-of-law literacy, universities can form a talent pipeline characterized by ethical commitment, practical acumen, and social responsibility—thus securing human-capital support for comprehensive law-based governance.

Future work should refine evaluation schemes, deepen school–practice collaboration, and iterate blended models to sustain quality improvement.

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