Public administration schools & institutes had better enhance information literacy training for senior public servants.

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Abstract: Senior public servants are leading forces of national economic development, social progress and national revival, as well as organizers and decision makers of informatization construction. Public administration schools & institutes had better enhance information literacy education for public servants. In particular, the training of information consciousness and information competency of senior public servants should be emphasized.

Keywords: Public Administration Schools & Institutes, Education & Training, Senior Public Servants, Information Literacy.

Informatization has become a significant task to strengthen national competitiveness. Senior public servants are leading forces of national economic development and social progress. Usually, in face of electronic computes and modern information equipment, most senior public servants are no longer in the peak period of curiosity and thirst for knowledge. Besides, due to busy public services, senior public servants, compared with experts, scholars or even young public servants, are relatively weak in information equipment application. The information literacy of senior public servants directly decides the results of informatization construction. Information network is not only a platform to serve the public, but also convenient system to understand public opinion, acquire worldwide information, and improve decision making. The information literacy of senior public servants is an important factor to update concepts, get familiar with public opinion, and elevate leadership and improve working efficiency.

Public administration schools & institutes had better shoulder the mission to play an active role in improving competency of public servants remarkably, and make the best of the following advantages. Firstly, public administration schools & institutes usually provide off-the-job comprehensive training to improve information literacy of public servants. Secondly, public administration schools & institutes often have advanced
information network centers, which are convenient for information literacy training for senior public servants. Thirdly, public administration schools & institutes generally have powerful technical forces in information literacy education. Therefore, public administration schools & institutes at each level had better add information literacy education to the list of compulsory courses, work out a unified training outline, and compile a number of high-quality training materials. Meanwhile, education style should be optimized to elevate information consciousness and information competency of senior public servants. It is necessary to apply achievements of public administration schools & institutes and social informatization to information literacy education, so that senior public servants can deeply understand changes brought by informatization to our life, study and work, and they would improve their information literacy consciously.

1. Public administration schools & institutes had better analyze training demand of senior public servants.

High information literacy enables senior public servants to improve their lifelong learning ability, innovation ability, and decision making capacity. Thus, all competent departments of public servants should work out assessment standards of information literacy of senior public servants, and treat information literacy as an essential competency while appointing public servants. Moreover, during training for senior public servants, the public administration schools & institutes should take reasonable measures to improve information literacy of public servants, and elevate leadership of senior public servants on such basis.

The target of training for public servant is to understand, guide and satisfy demands. Yet, in practical situation, more work should be done. Clearly, it is of great necessity to promote training reform, carry out in-depth researches on training demands of public servants, and improve training level. The department in charges of such training had better comprehensively consider strategic demand, organizational demand, and individual demand, so as to adjust training policy, training strategy, and training plan accordingly. All training organizations should adjust their courses, teaching methods and teaching management flexibly on the basis of training demand
and training plans, so as to meet different needs.

2. Different training targets of public administration schools & institutes:

   (i) Training targets for public servants engaged in decision making: executive
       public servants are usually busy with decision making in policies, work
       allocation and organizational arrangement. Thus, the training for senior public
       servants should be macroscopic and focused on information consciousness.
       For this reason, the targets of information literacy training for senior public
       servants are: complete and accurate information is essential to reasonable
       decision making, information acquisition, and information communication;
       training of information retrieval ability, namely the ability of searching
       information provided by libraries, information banks, information center and
       the like, as well as the capacity in using information systems and information
       resources of corresponding industry and departments, so as to understand and
       get familiar with social, political, economic and cultural information.

   (ii) Training targets for public servants engaged in basic operations: ordinary
       public servants are usually busy with organizing routine work, handling
       general affairs and technical problems, and submitting useful information or
       materials for higher officers in decision making. Thus, the targets of training
       for ordinary public servants should be advanced, practical, and focused on
       information competency. In detail, such training may include: the ability of
       using information equipment, especially computers and network information
       devices; information analysis ability, namely the ability to find useful
       information in a world of information explosion; information retrieval ability,
       namely the ability to establish and get familiar with information sources,
       develop and make the best of information sources; information processing
       ability, namely the ability to process, sort out, read, use and save information;
       information innovation ability, namely the ability to shape information of new
       value after collection, classification, integration, and analysis of original
       information.

3. Practical training of public administration schools & institutes
Practical training indicates reasonable selection of content that is taught and reasonable arrangement of training schedule.

Reasonable selection of content that is taught: information literacy training for senior public servants should be focused on elementary knowledge (such as basic concept and theory) and expertise of information science, because basis indicates high universality and mobility. Theory may get outdated, but ability is lifelong useful. Therefore, during training, some outdated or to-be-outdated knowledge should be rejected and practical theory should be highlighted, so as to shape an updated knowledge system suitable for the development of information science. At present, the content of information literacy training for senior public servants should include three aspects: firstly, the role and significance of informatization construction, information technology, and information industry; secondly, elementary knowledge and applications of computers, including understanding of computer hardware, as well as Word, WPS, Excel, MSN, QQ, multimedia player, common antivirus software, etc.; thirdly, elementary knowledge and applications of the internet, including search and download of information, use of database and search engine, email sending and receiving, file transmission, blog, etc.

Reasonable arrangement of training schedule: information literacy training for senior public servants should be focused on elementary knowledge and common operating skill. A routine training schedule usually starts with theory, but such schedule may scare a lot of green hands. Thus, specific operations can be taught at the beginning so as to enhance trainees' perceptual knowledge, and then theory study can be started. Namely, it would be better to let trainees get familiar with specific information technology visually, and then lead them to summarize basic theory unconsciously. This helps reduce difficulty in learning, promote trainees’ understanding of information technology, and stimulate their interest in learning.

4. Flexible training mode of public administration schools & institutes

(i) Theory-based training mode: this mode is characterized by trainer’s oral presentation and demonstration to teach new knowledge and consolidate what has been learned, such as the role and significance of information
technology, information industry, and information literacy, the type of
information resources, the principle and method of information retrieval, the
tools for information retrieval, and the arrangement & application
requirement of library information resources. Moreover, learning ability,
innovation ability, decision-making ability, E-commerce and E-government
affairs can be integrated into the training of information consciousness and
information competency. This mode is applicable to information literacy
training for senior public servants.

(ii) Multimedia-based training mode: this mode is to make the best of modern
information technology to integrate teaching materials by means of
multimedia (pictures, texts, voices, images, films, etc.), so as to create a
vivid and visualized setting. This mode has two advantages: firstly,
multimedia helps improve training efficiency; secondly, this mode helps
optimize teaching strategy and allows free, creative, multi-level learning.

(iii) Competency-based training mode: this mode is good for improving trainees’
self-learning ability, as well as the ability to analyze and settle problems by
themselves. Detailed measures: after a certain period of training, relatively
difficult “tasks” may be arranged according to trainees’ jobs and trainees are
supposed to complete the tasks with the help of information services
provided by libraries, information banks, information centers, as well as
modern information technologies (such as computer, communication
network or multimedia). Then, exchange and discussion between trainees
can be arranged, so that they can re-view knowledge and expertise of
information science they have learned during completion of the “tasks”.

(iv) Practice-based training mode: practical operation is good for evaluating
trainees’ information consciousness and information competency, as well as
teaching effects – final goals of teaching. Apparently, to enhance teaching
effects, there should be precise teaching and more practice. Here, “precise
teaching” means a trainer should tell elementary theory of a subject precisely;
“more practice” indicates that, trainees should be given sufficient time to
practice on schedule, so as to apply modern information technologies more consciously. Computer operating system, common software, computer information retrieval, online information search and download, use of database and search engines, email sending and receiving, remote access, and file transmission should be in the list of “more practice”.

(v) Library-based training mode: libraries have unique advantages in information environment, information resources, information specialists, and information technology. Libraries and library staff are ideal places and choices for information literacy education. Thus, during or after training, library-based teaching is remarkably useful. Trainees may use a library to search more information related to their courses, which accordingly helps trainees to gain high ability in information recognition, collection, analysis, and innovation. That’s because, libraries and library staff may help the trainees to get familiar with elementary theory from manual retrieval to computer retrieval, as well as retrieval path, retrieval strategy, and applications of network information tools.

Public administration schools & institutes should set up human capital and be people-oriented, which is not only one of the core principles of modern education and training, but also a focus of education & training for public servants. Marxists believe that, human is the most important element of all productive forces.

To advance with time, we’d better be open-minded. All training should meet strategic demand, organizational demand, and trainee’s individual demand. Innovation is a nonstop process. In view of training for public servants, we’d better be innovative in theories, systems, and methods. Only this can we advance with the era.

Bibliography:

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