

Cultivation of Applied Talents through Sino-Foreign Cooperative Education in Colleges and Universities

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ABSTRACT

In the context of economic globalization, sino-foreign cooperative education in colleges and universities, as an integral part of higher education, not only promotes the internationalization of education but also introduces high-quality educational resources from abroad, which holds significant importance for cultivating applied talents. This study, based on the perspective of sino-foreign cooperative education, primarily elucidates the current status and forms of such cooperation, analyzes the opportunities and challenges it brings to the cultivation of applied talents, and explores strategies for cultivating applied talents through cooperative education from five aspects: educational objectives, student quality, curriculum design, practical platforms, and faculty team construction. The aim is to offer insights and references for the practice of sino-foreign cooperative education in colleges and universities.

KEYWORDS

Sino-foreign cooperative education in colleges and universities; Applied talents; Strategies

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Against the backdrop of globalization, cross-cultural communication and the cultivation of international perspectives have become particularly crucial in modern education. To address this challenge, China has implemented sino-foreign cooperative education in colleges and universities at the level of higher education. This model not only facilitates the sharing of educational resources and the enhancement of educational quality but also provides students with broader academic horizons and international exchange opportunities. One of the goals of sino-foreign cooperative education in colleges and universities is to cultivate applied talents, requiring not only specialized knowledge but also practical skills and problem-solving abilities. However, this cooperative model also presents certain issues and challenges, such as uneven distribution of educational resources and barriers to cross-cultural communication. This study aims to explore the strategic pathways for cultivating applied talents through sino-foreign cooperative education in colleges and universities, addressing a significant issue facing current cooperative education efforts.

1 Characteristics and Training Needs of Applied Talents

(1) Overview of applied talents

In the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, it was emphasized to "improve the strategic layout of talent, accelerate the construction of an important talent center and

innovation highland in the world, focus on forming a comparative advantage in international talent competition". This highlights the significance of talent cultivation. Numerous Chinese scholars have studied the concept of applied talents.

According to Sun Shengxi et al. (2015), applied talents possess both professional theoretical knowledge and practical operational abilities, enabling them to meet the needs of modern social and economic development and technological advancements. Luo Qinghua et al. (2020) put forth more specific requirements for applied talents, suggesting that they should possess practical operational skills, innovation abilities, teamwork skills, communication skills, as well as sensitivity and adaptability to social development trends and industry demands. Zhang Guangrong (2021) defines applied talents as individuals cultivated in the context of higher education with practical, innovative, and interdisciplinary capabilities. They can apply learned knowledge to solve real-world problems and demonstrate exceptional comprehensive qualities in interdisciplinary cooperation.

In summary, applied talents possess both specialized knowledge and practical abilities, allowing them to effectively address issues and exhibit innovation in practical work. Additionally, they require teamwork skills, a sense of social responsibility, and strong professional ethics. Compared to theoretical talents, applied talents focus more on practical and applicable skill development.

(2) Characteristics and training needs of applied talents

Applied talents possess distinctive characteristics and training needs, including:

1). Practicality: Practicality is a fundamental attribute of applied talents, involving the application of acquired knowledge to practical domains. This demands specialized practical operational abilities to deal with work-related issues. Colleges and universities need to cultivate students' practical abilities through various means. Methods like internships and practical training can engage students directly in real-world work. Establishing laboratories and training bases, providing practical venues and equipment, forming proficient teaching teams, and offering professional guidance and counseling, as well as designing courses relevant to actual work, all contribute to merging theory with practice.

2). Innovation: Innovation is a crucial trait of applied talents. Beyond solid professional knowledge and practical abilities, they showcase creative thinking and actions while solving real-world problems. They boldly attempt new methods and approaches, thereby propelling technological and industry advancement. Colleges and universities should guide applied talents to actively explore and innovate, cultivating them into individuals with innovative spirit and capabilities.

3). Locality: Locality is crucial for applied talents, who play a significant role in local economic development by integrating deeply into society. They are closely integrated with specific regions and industries, adapting their acquired knowledge and skills to local socio-economic conditions and industry demands, thus contributing to local and corporate development. Therefore, cultivating applied talents should encourage their attention to local development needs and provide them with regionally adaptable knowledge and skills.

4). Comprehensiveness: Applied talents possess interdisciplinary comprehensive qualities. In addition to solid professional knowledge, they can comprehensively apply knowledge and skills from various fields to solve complex problems. Consequently, colleges and universities should focus on cultivating students' interdisciplinary abilities, guiding them in cross-disciplinary exploration and knowledge fusion, and fostering their ability to tackle intricate problems across multiple domains.

In conclusion, applied talents are characterized by practicality, innovation, locality, and comprehensiveness. When cultivating applied talents, colleges and universities should adopt

comprehensive approaches based on these characteristics.

2 Development Status and Forms of Sino-Foreign Cooperative Education in Colleges and Universities

(1) Overview of Sino-Foreign cooperative education

Sino-foreign cooperative education refers to a form of educational cooperation where Chinese higher education institutions partner with foreign counterparts to conduct joint educational programs. It is a non-profit endeavor aimed at importing foreign educational resources and management experiences, enhancing the quality and level of education in China, aiding educational reform, and advancing the internationalization of education. Unlike traditional study abroad or overseas joint programs, cooperative education involves close cooperation between partnering institutions in terms of educational conditions, teaching programme, textbooks, faculty team, and more. The goal is to jointly cultivate internationally-oriented applied talents with both domestic and international dual certifications.

(2) Development status and forms of Sino-Foreign cooperative education

Sino-foreign cooperative education in China has a history spanning several decades and has gradually evolved into various modes and forms. The following five forms are prominent:

(1). Project Cooperation: Colleges and universities cooperate with foreign counterparts to conduct specific projects, such as dual-degree projects and credit transfer projects. (2). Joint School: Colleges and universities cooperate to establish joint colleges or institutions, often managed and prepared by both partners. Students can study at both institutions and ultimately receive degrees conferred by both schools. (3). Faculty Exchange: Colleges and universities hire foreign faculty to teach on campus or send their own faculty for short-term visits, lectures, or exchanges at foreign universities. (4). Talent Cultivation Cooperation: Universities cooperate with enterprises to implement dual-system training programs, cultivating graduates tailored to meet enterprise demands. (5). Transnational Education: Colleges and universities may establish branches or educational institutions abroad to conduct internationalized education. This form of cooperation typically requires registration in the target country and compliance with local laws and education systems.

3 Opportunities and Challenges of Sino-Foreign Cooperative Education for Cultivating Applied Talents

(1) Opportunities and advantages of Sino-Foreign cooperative education

Sino-foreign cooperative education offers unique advantages for cultivating applied talents. Firstly, it provides students with more internationalized educational opportunities, exposing them to advanced international teaching content and methods, thereby broadening their horizons. Secondly, cooperative education enhances the quality of teaching by introducing high-quality foreign resources, strengthening practical components, and cultivating students' practical operational abilities and innovative spirit. Thirdly, it offers an international learning environment, enabling students to become familiar with cross-cultural communication and enhancing their international competitiveness. Lastly, cooperative education contributes to the development of the education sector by attracting domestic

and foreign investment, providing financial support for school development. Moreover, it expands the scope of disciplines, introduces new subject areas and specialties, meeting students' diverse disciplinary needs.

(2) Challenges faced by Sino-Foreign cooperative education

Sino-foreign cooperative education in colleges and universities encounters a range of challenges. Firstly, cultural differences and language barriers are common issues in cooperative education. Different educational systems and values may lead to conflicts in teaching philosophies and methods. Secondly, maintaining teaching quality is a challenge. Cooperative education requires adjustments to teaching content and methods based on the characteristics and needs of domestic students. Failure to do so could impact the effectiveness of learning. Thirdly, faculty team and management issues are crucial. It's important to ensure that the professional level and teaching experience of teachers from both sides are compatible and establish effective management mechanisms. Lastly, the sustainability of projects is a concern. Cooperative education projects require long-term cooperation and investment. Disputes or issues regarding benefit distribution, resource allocation, and other aspects between partners may affect the continuity and sustainable development of projects.

4 Strategies for Cultivating Applied Talents through Sino-Foreign Cooperative Education in Colleges and Universities

(1) Determine clear school orientation and set educational objectives

Sino-foreign cooperative education in colleges and universities is a challenging educational cooperation program. Determining clear school orientation and setting educational objectives are crucial for the successful development of cooperative education programs that cultivate applied talents. This approach can provide students with internationally-aligned educational resources and high-quality teaching experiences, contributing to the development of globally competitive talents for the nation. On one hand, colleges and universities should thoroughly research market demands and competitive environments, understand trends and employment demands in both domestic and foreign education markets, and formulate feasible school orientation accordingly. This will help clarify the unique features and advantages of the school and its partners, avoid homogeneous competition, and foster differentiated educational models. On the other hand, setting educational objectives is essential for cultivating high-quality applied talents that meet future social needs. By leveraging the strengths of cooperative institutions and teaching resources, combined with market demands, schools should devise training plans and curriculum design that focus on cultivating students' innovation abilities, cross-cultural communication skills, and international competitiveness. Providing internship opportunities and international exchange programs will offer students broader development opportunities.

(2) Maintain rigorous student quality control and improve student quality

During the enrollment process of sino-foreign cooperative education in colleges and universities, the focus should not solely be on increasing enrollment numbers. Instead, it should be placed on improving the quality and qualification of enrolled students. This approach will genuinely enhance the program's quality and influence, making a positive contribution to students' personal development and social progress. Firstly, implement rigorous selection mechanisms. Develop precise and scientific admission criteria and selection procedures that comprehensively assess students' academic

achievements, English proficiency, and overall qualities. This can be achieved through exams, interviews, comprehensive evaluations, etc., ensuring that admitted students possess high academic potential and the capacity to adapt to international education. Secondly, strengthen audit and control measures. Enhance the review and assessment of student information, understanding academic backgrounds, family backgrounds, personality traits, etc., to ensure the authenticity and suitability of students. Thirdly, diversify enrollment channels. Establish partnerships with domestic and foreign secondary schools, strengthen online enrollment, leverage educational exhibitions and roadshows, and actively promote enrollment information through various avenues. Simultaneously, promote the school's faculty strength, academic research achievements, international exchanges and cooperation, and other aspects to enhance its market competitiveness and attractiveness.

(3) Optimize curriculum design and innovate diverse teaching methods

To enhance the educational quality of sino-foreign cooperative education, colleges and universities should continually expand and optimize curriculum design and teaching methods. This contributes positively to the successful development of such cooperative education and the personal growth of students. In terms of curriculum design, colleges and universities can introduce a variety of internationally-related courses based on professional demands. These courses might cover topics such as international relations, international business, cross-cultural communication, and more. Moreover, emphasis should be placed on enhancing students' language skills by adding English language learning courses. Combining practical activities with comprehensive training in listening, speaking, reading, and writing will help students overcome language and cultural communication barriers. Additionally, strengthening the establishment of innovative and practical courses offers students opportunities to engage in scientific research, social practice, project practice and other activities, fostering their innovative spirit and practical abilities. In terms of teaching methods, colleges and universities can adopt diverse teaching methods such as case-based teaching, group discussions, and project-based learning. By utilizing information technology and internet tools, creating online learning platforms and resources will provide students with personalized learning experiences anytime, anywhere.

(4) Integrate resources and provide internship and practical platforms

To cultivate applied talents through cooperative education, it's crucial to integrate resources and provide internship and practical platforms. Firstly, colleges and universities can establish close cooperation with domestic and international enterprises, industry organizations, and research institutions. Cooperating with enterprises allows students to engage in real-world projects, understand practical business operations and solutions, and apply learned knowledge in real-world scenarios. Cooperating with industry organizations and research institutions offers students opportunities to participate in various industry studies, technological developments, etc., cultivating their innovation and practical work capabilities. Secondly, colleges and universities should create their own practical platforms, offering diverse internship and practical opportunities. Establishing discipline-related laboratories, workshops, innovation and entrepreneurship bases, and other practical platforms provides students with locations for practical application and experience. Thirdly, leveraging alumni networks to seek support and involvement from alumni or corporate executives provides professional guidance, practical cases, and resources, helping students understand real work environments and career development opportunities. Additionally, organizing on-campus training, competitions, social practice, and volunteer services, and more helps students develop comprehensive qualities through various avenues.

(5) Strengthen the construction of an internationalized faculty team

Teachers play a crucial role in education. Strengthening the construction of an internationalized faculty team with high standards is vital for cultivating applied talents through sino-foreign cooperative education in colleges and universities. Firstly, introduce international faculty members. Recruit foreign teachers with cross-cultural teaching experience and abundant professional knowledge. These teachers can bring international educational experience and academic research achievements, providing students with international perspectives and a global learning environment. Secondly, promote teacher exchanges and training. Through forms like teacher visits and cooperative research, facilitate interaction and communication between domestic teachers and the international education field. Thirdly, encourage teachers to engage in international projects and research, expanding their international exchange and cooperation opportunities. Cooperative projects with foreign universities on joint teaching, and research cooperation etc., allow teachers to update their teaching content, understand the latest developments in international education, and bring these experiences and achievements back to own schools, thereby enhancing teaching quality and internationalization. Fourthly, provide a favorable education and support environment, including research funding, laboratory facilities, academic exchange platforms, etc. Additionally, establish teacher assistance mechanisms and professional development plans, encouraging them to participate in academic exchange and research activities, enhancing their academic reputation and international influence. In summary, a high-level internationalized faculty team not only ensures the cultivation of applied talents but also boosts the school's international impact and competitiveness, driving the sustainable development of sino-foreign cooperative education in colleges and universities.

5 Conclusion

With the rapid development of globalization, sino-foreign cooperative education in colleges and universities has become an effective approach to cultivating applied talents. This cooperative model not only enriches educational resources but also provides students with broader opportunities for development, aiding in cultivating applied talents with practical abilities and an international perspective. It not only opens up broader paths for students' personal development but also offers robust support for the social economic progress. In summary, the cultivation of applied talents through sino-foreign cooperative education should be oriented towards internationalization and diversity, aiming to produce versatile talents. Achieving this goal requires joint efforts from educational institutions, as well as various sectors of society, to truly cultivate talents that can adapt to globalization.

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