

An Exploration of the Path of Students' Global Competence Cultivation from the Perspective of International and Area Studies Construction

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Abstract: This study explores the cultivation of global competence among Chinese university students majoring in English, from the perspective of International and Area Studies Construction. The research indicates that Chinese universities should refine existing talent training programs by designing a curriculum system that encompasses multidisciplinary knowledge while also delving into specific countries or regions. Based on robust language proficiency, this approach aims to deepen students' understanding of general knowledge about particular Nations or Areas. Guided by the principles of the Belt and Road Initiative and the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, the study emphasizes the importance of fostering a strong sense of national and ethnic identity, respecting and embracing global diversity, and promoting comprehensive quality education. Furthermore, teachers play a crucial role in this educational ecosystem. Only with solid humanistic qualities can educators integrate ideological and political education, cultural literacy, and language skills holistically in their teaching. Despite existing barriers between disciplines and institutions, integrating resources from various schools and enhancing cooperation among disciplinary experts are essential steps to accelerate the internationalization of higher education. Only by doing so can universities and colleges cultivate talents who are truly capable of meeting the challenges of globalization and contributing to the country's international strategy.

Keywords: Global Competence; International and Area Studies

1. Introduction

The world today is undergoing a period of

significant change unseen in a century. The Chinese authorities put forward the three dimensions of 'great change'—change of the times, change of history, and change of the world. It also reaffirmed the commitment to building a new type of international relations and other strategic layouts. China has embarked on a new journey of modernization. When it is thrust to the center stage of the world, the college students must play the role of a responsible major country and shoulder the responsibility of a major country.

Higher education, as an important link in the cultivation of foreign language talents in regional countries, needs to solve the problem of 'supply-side' reform in language and culture, knowledge structure, and academic concepts. China need not only to 'go out' with China's profound culture but also understand the audience psychology of the local culture. This requires training regional and national talents to fully understand and master their own countries' conditions and cultures, and more importantly, to have an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the countries' conditions and cultures of most countries in the world [1].

At present, only the United Kingdom, the United States, and China carry out large-scale International Area studies, and Germany does a little [2]. What is the need for Area studies in large and powerful countries? As a 'quasi-powerful country', China is very different from the above countries in conducting Area studies. China was once a weak country, and at that stage, China not only did not have the ability to accumulate a large amount of extra-territorial knowledge but also did not have a very urgent need to do so. So, research foundation of regional and national study was very fragile. Since the reform and Opening Up, the modernization of the country has been transformed at a world-shocking speed, which has made the contradiction between the extremely weak extra-territorial basics and the

extra-territorial knowledge that should be possessed for the image of a big and strong country increasingly obvious. This means that there is a strong and urgent need for regional and national studies in the country. China needs to address the conflicts between the need for a good and fast-approaching comprehensive power and the need to actively defend and expand our interests abroad, and the shortage of knowledge and discourse that reality can provide, as well as the policy tools used to defend those interests. This is also the important background of the times when regional and national studies is now listed as a key discipline.

2. About Global Competence



Figure 1. Global Competence Defined by PISA

Global competence has received increasing attention from the academic community since it was proposed by the American Association for International Educational Exchange in 1988. Global competence is an important indicator of the core qualities of talents in the 21st century, and many organizations and institutions have also mentioned the connotation and framework of global competence. Among them, the PISA Global Competency Framework (shown as figure 1 Global Competence Defined by PISA), jointly published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Harvard University in 2018, defines global competency as a multidimensional concept that requires a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to be successfully applied to global issues or cross-cultural situations.[3] Global issues are those that affect all people and have a profound impact on current and future generations. Cross-cultural situations refer to

face-to-face, virtual, or mediated encounters with people who are perceived to have different cultural backgrounds.

Developing global competence is a lifelong process, but education can shape it. After more than 20 years of evolution, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the OECD, the U.S. Department of Education, and others have produced reports emphasizing the importance of global competence for national and global development, calling for higher education to take on the responsibility of fostering globally competent people, with support from governments, employers, and all sectors of society. Experts and scholars in the field of education have conducted in-depth research on the concept and connotation of global competence from a doctrinal point of view, and in 2016, Tsinghua University issued the release of the Tsinghua University Global Strategy, which identifies three central tasks and nine strategic directions. In 2016, Tsinghua University released the Global Strategy of Tsinghua University, identifying three central tasks and nine strategic directions, of which 'global competence' is one of the nine strategic directions, and focusing on the cultivation of top-notch innovative talents with 'global competence' is the top priority. 2021, Tsinghua University formulated and implemented the 'Tsinghua University Global Strategy 2030', which formed the framework of global competence, and put the global competence framework into practice [4]. In 2021, Tsinghua University formulated and implemented the 'Tsinghua University 2030 Global Strategy', which formed a global competency framework and divided global competency into three levels: cognitive, interpersonal and personal, and six core qualities: world knowledge and global issues, language, openness and respect, communication and writing, self-awareness and self-confidence, and ethics and responsibility. Firstly, at the knowledge or cognitive level, International and Area studies require individuals to learn about world history and culture, to understand common global issues, and to be able to deeply understand and apply this knowledge to independent thinking; to be able to master at least one foreign language, and to use it to deeply experience, understand and appreciate different cultures.

Secondly, at the behavioural or interpersonal

level, students require individuals to have intercultural interpersonal communication and communication skills. Through effective communication, students can enhance mutual understanding and trust, and resolve conflicts and contradictions; students should have a sense of responsibility for the destiny of mankind and the sustainable development of society, and students should be able to speak and act appropriately and make responsible decisions when engaging in our professional work and occupational activities.

Lastly, at the level of personality qualities, universities require individuals to have a deep understanding of themselves, their own people and culture, and a sense of self-awareness.

3. Relationship between Global Competence and Regional Country Studies

In the era of economic globalization, rapid development of the Internet and information technology, and increasing common challenges facing humanity, China have entered a time of interconnectedness and interdependence. The transnational flow of human resources, capital, and information is becoming more widespread, and the demand for internationalized and complex professionals is becoming more urgent.[5] Global competence, in short, is an individual's ability to learn, work, and interact effectively in an international and multicultural environment. It is important to note that what "global perspective" often refers to is an important component of global competence, which is a broader concept that encompasses knowledge, practical skills, and personality traits.

Global competence helps young people develop cultural awareness and respectful interactions in an increasingly diverse society; recognize and challenge cultural biases and prejudices, promoting harmonious living in a multicultural community; prepare for the world of work, which increasingly demands individuals who are effective communicators, open to people from different cultures, able to build trust, and demonstrate respect for others in a diverse team; communicate with others in the community and workplace, especially as technology makes it easier to connect globally; take advantage of inherently interconnected digital spaces, challenge biased media representations, and make their voices heard online in a responsible manner; and care about global issues, engaging

with social, political, economic, and environmental challenges.

1. Global competence has become one of the indicators for measuring talent in the new era.

2. Regional country studies cannot be separated from talents with high global competence, and international competence training is the foundation of regional country studies talent training. Possess a global vision and awareness, and uphold an open and inclusive mindset. Think critically and explore boldly and confidently.

3. The cultivation of internationally competent talents embodies the responsibility of a great power and shows the style of a great power. In line with the "Belt and Road" initiative and the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, it is a necessary political quality for contemporary college students.

Global competence thus supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), both by providing the vision of education promoted by the SDGs and by encouraging young people to act for the collective well-being and universal good embodied in the SDGs.

4. Cultivation Path of Global Competence for International and Area Studies Talents

4.1 Improving the Training Programme

In today's globalization, the study of regional country studies is becoming increasingly important. It not only requires us to understand the history, culture, politics, and economy of different countries and regions but also requires us to be able to understand and solve complex international problems from a global perspective [6]. Therefore, the cultivation of regional country studies talents with a high degree of international perspective and expertise has become a major challenge in the field of education. It is important to reflect on the path of cultivating global competence in higher education in order to crack the dilemma of both quantity and quality of regional country studies talents.

Constructing a localised global competency framework, creating a high-quality curriculum, and improving the assessment of global competency:

Firstly, the education system of regional country studies needs to be a combination of intersectionality and integration. This means that Universities need to design a curriculum

system that can cover multidisciplinary knowledge as well as delve into specific countries or regions. Such a curriculum system should include both general education and specialized education, enabling students to acquire broad knowledge while also gaining in-depth knowledge of specific countries or regions. For example, undergraduate programs may include world history, geography, politics, economy, and culture, while postgraduate programs may focus more on topics such as politics, economy, culture, and society in contemporary times.

Secondly, language proficiency is the foundation of regional country studies. In addition to English, it is very important to master the language of the country under study. This can not only help researchers obtain first-hand research information but also help them better understand and integrate into local society. Therefore, it is essential to encourage students to learn foreign languages, especially those that will aid them in their research endeavors.

Moreover, Area studies is a strategic discipline that has a significant impact on a country's international strategy. When universities train talents in this area, it should focus on cultivating their academic research level, field research ability, and external communication skills. This requires students to possess not only profound academic backgrounds but also keen awareness of real-life issues and the ability to respond and solve problems promptly.

4.2 Implementing the Training Process

For the cultivation of foreign language talents, most domestic universities still follow the traditional model, focusing on the concept of language knowledge and skills, and have not been able to fully integrate the concept of internationalization into the actual talent cultivation process.

As of 2019, the number of Chinese students abroad has reached 700,000, a year-on-year increase of 6.25% [7]. The total volume of higher education in China ranks first in the world, and China is also the largest destination country for foreign students under the "Belt and Road" initiative and the concept of the community of human destiny. As an important part of China's education system, the cultivation of talents in China's higher education should be based on the premise of socialist core values,

regardless of disciplines. The fundamental task of education in China is to cultivate highly globally competent talents who take socialist modernization as their mission. It is necessary to organically combine ideological education, general education and global competence training, and in the process of training, insist on the implementation of a high sense of national identity, respect for and tolerance of global diversity, and the comprehensive development of multiple quality education. For foreign students, universities should cultivate outstanding talents who "know China, love China," respect and recognize cultural orientation, and contribute to the building of a community of human destiny. Therefore, the cultivation of talents in regional country studies should be based on the premise of deep understanding and love of Chinese national culture, and the talent cultivation program should not only focus on the cultivation of students' cultural self-confidence, but also continue to enhance students' cultural self-awareness. Only in this way can universities cultivate regional country studies talents with Chinese sentiment, standing on national strategy and social demand, and telling Chinese stories well. Regional country studies talents with international competence can strengthen the exchange and dialog with various countries and ethnic groups, help the country exert influence, and promote national discourse in multiple dimensions.

However, China's current stock of knowledge about global countries still cannot meet the growing demand. Therefore, the cultivation of regional and national talents also needs to incorporate general knowledge and general education courses into the organizational structure. Area studies talents should be interdisciplinary high-end foreign language talents with "country knowledge", "field knowledge" and "region knowledge", oriented to national strategic realities, and comprehensively integrating the following topics They should be oriented to the national strategic realities and comprehensively integrate the political, economic, military, historical, cultural and educational fields of the target countries or regions. With their professional knowledge, they can serve the humanistic exchanges, cultural communication, economic and trade exchanges and strategic cooperation between China and foreign countries. With

professional knowledge, students are able to gain a keen insight into sensitive information, respond to international changes and challenges, comprehensively study development trends, and design and plan strategic programs.

The fundamental ability of foreign language specialization is the fundamental ability of talents in regional country studies, and only “foreign language+ professionalism” is in line with the six core qualities of the three dimensions of global competence. Language skills are the knocking brick of regional country studies, but at present, most of the teaching of language majors in domestic universities still remains in the state of textbook-based, from the traditional teaching method to the blended teaching mode of excess.[8] This does not facilitate the cultivation of students’ cross-cultural communication, understanding and analysis of international issues. Moreover, in the information age of the rapid development of artificial intelligence, language intelligent tools also face new challenges and opportunities for language professional teaching. Colleges and universities should wake up to the fact that the proper application of language intelligence tools can promote the development of personalized training and characteristic training of foreign language majors. Optimize the cultivation curriculum and adjust the course structure to help solve the difficulties and pain points in the cultivation of English skills, humanistic knowledge, innovative thinking and intercultural communication and other abilities. In the realm of education, teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the learning ecosystem. However, the current state of regional country studies training reveals a significant deficiency in globally competent faculty members, an insufficient international perspective among educators, and a lack of global competence within the teaching body [9]. To address these issues, higher education institutions should incorporate individuals with technical expertise, international outlooks, and knowledge of global principles into their faculty development strategies. Additionally, existing educators should be encouraged to undergo specialized training, earn international professional qualifications, or have global competency integrated into their performance incentives. Universities must also support teachers in undertaking courses that enhance global competency, participating in interdisciplinary

research, engaging in study visits, and fostering international academic exchanges or collaborative research projects. This approach will mitigate the risk of superficial or half-baked understanding during the instruction of core global competency concepts. Simultaneously, there remains room for teachers to augment their own traditional cultural literacy [10]. The combination of ‘self-literacy + language bridge’ serves as the foundation for empowering global competency instruction. Only with the backing of the teacher’s own humanistic qualities can they seamlessly integrate ideological education, humanistic attributes, and linguistic skills into their pedagogy. This integration allows students to effectively assimilate all elements, possess the requisite global competency, clarify international relations, accurately comprehend the global landscape, maintain cultural confidence, and genuinely uphold the crucial responsibility of disseminating China’s excellent traditional culture and narrating China’s story effectively.

4.3 Promoting Multi-party collaboration (building cultivation pathways)

Barriers still exist between disciplines and between schools. Integrate the resources of each school, strengthen cooperation among subject experts, and accelerate the internationalization process of higher education. To strengthen the construction of first-class disciplines and first-class majors in colleges and universities, and to pay attention to the importance of benchmarking against international standards, it is necessary to pay attention to highlighting the local characteristics and realizing the goal of local internationalization. Each university should actively carry out cooperation with outstanding universities and research institutions at home and abroad, and actively integrate into the international academic circle. Encouragement of student field trip programs, support for students to multinational enterprises, overseas universities and colleges travel, internships. In the second classroom or a series of activities, and other forms of training students to analyze and solve global problems.

5. Conclusion

In general, talents in regional country studies need to have a broad intellectual vision, profound professional knowledge, a keen awareness of real-world problems, strong

problem-solving ability and good cross-cultural communication skills. This requires comprehensive consideration and layout in curriculum design, teaching methods, faculty and campus environment. Only in this way can universities and colleges cultivate talents who can truly adapt to the challenges of globalization and contribute to the country's international strategy.

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