

Research on the Cultivation and Reflection of International Students in China

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Abstract

International student education constitutes a crucial component of higher education internationalization in China, undertaking the strategic mission of building the “Study in China” brand and cultivating international talents who understand and maintain friendly relations with China. This paper elaborates on the practical value of international student cultivation in Chinese universities, identifies prominent dilemmas including disconnection between language teaching and professional instruction, insufficient cross cultural adaptation support, defective curriculum frameworks and incomplete quality evaluation mechanisms. Corresponding optimization strategies are proposed from three dimensions: teaching system reform, improvement of student support services and construction of comprehensive quality assurance systems. The research intends to enhance overall training quality for international students, strengthen their cultural recognition and cross cultural communicative competence, and facilitate people to people exchanges as well as the development of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Keywords

International Students in China; Talent Cultivation; Cross cultural Adaptation; Study in China; Quality Assurance.

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of continuous opening-up in higher education, the scale of international students pursuing degrees in Chinese universities has kept expanding, and “Study in China” has gradually grown into a representative brand for Chinese higher education to engage with the global academic community. International-student education is not merely enrollment expansion; rather, it represents a systematic educational project integrating classroom teaching, student administration, cultural integration and quality assessment [1]. In recent years, several higher-education institutions have prioritized enrollment scale while neglecting connotative quality improvement, which gives rise to such challenges as misalignment between Chinese-language training and major-related courses, inadequate cross-cultural adaptive support, and simplistic evaluation standards for training outcomes [5].

Scholars at home and abroad have conducted extensive studies on international-student cultivation. Some researchers focus on curriculum-construction dilemmas and point out that the separation of general Chinese instruction from academic-Chinese training restricts international students’ academic performance in specialized disciplines [4]. Other empirical studies indicate that cross-cultural communication barriers and inadequate academic and life support services exert negative impacts on international students’ learning experience and psychological adjustment in host universities [3]. Existing literature has laid a solid theoretical foundation, yet most countermeasures are advanced from isolated perspectives, lacking multi-dimensional systematic integration covering curriculum design, student services and quality supervision [7]. On this basis, this paper sorts out the practical value of cultivating

international students in China, analyzes realistic bottlenecks, and constructs targeted optimization paths, so as to provide references for universities pursuing high-quality connotative development of international-student education.

2. Connotation and Practical Value of Cultivating International Students in China

2.1. Core Connotation of International-Student Cultivation

The cultivation of international students in China is a composite talent-training activity oriented toward professional competence, linguistic literacy and cross-cultural accomplishment. Three mutually interrelated dimensions constitute its core connotation. First is **professional competence**, which requires international students to master systematic disciplinary knowledge and practical capabilities for solving real-world problems [1]. Second is **linguistic and academic literacy**, covering daily Chinese communication as well as academic Chinese competence for literature reading, class participation and academic assignment completion [5]. Third is comprehensive **cross-cultural accomplishment**: international students are expected to acquire objective perceptions of Chinese history and social realities, develop cross-cultural communication skills, and act as messengers for bilateral people-to-people exchanges [2].

These three dimensions reinforce one another. Linguistic-academic literacy serves as the fundamental prerequisite for major-field study; professional competence represents the core objective of talent training; cross-cultural accomplishment embodies extended educational value beyond classroom instruction [6]. For international students, coordinated development across these three dimensions enables substantial growth during overseas study, instead of merely completing degree-related credits. If universities only attach importance to credit completion and degree conferral while ignoring cultural perception and cross-cultural capacity building, it will be difficult to fulfill the educational mission of fostering international talents who understand and befriend China [7].

2.2. Practical Value of International-Student Cultivation

First, it accelerates the internationalization process of domestic higher education. International students bring diversified cultural backgrounds and thinking paradigms to campus communities, which drives curriculum innovation, improves faculty's international teaching capacity and enriches multicultural campus atmosphere, helping domestic universities further integrate into the global higher-education system [2]. Traditional campus education is relatively homogeneous in cultural composition. The participation of international students promotes mixed-mode teaching, multicultural events and academic dialogues, pushing universities to revise training schemes and optimize administrative services to meet international educational demands [6].

Second, it deepens people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries. International students function as vital bridges linking China and their home nations [1]. During their studies in China, they gain direct perceptions of real-world Chinese society, and many will objectively share Chinese stories upon returning home, promoting mutual understanding and friendship among nations. A considerable number of graduates take positions in government, education and economic-trade sectors of their home countries, forming valuable talent networks supporting Sino-foreign cooperative initiatives [7].

Third, it supports the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind. In response to global cooperation-driven demand for international talents, high-quality international-student cultivation delivers skilled professionals for partner countries across engineering, medicine, agriculture, economics and other domains, underpinning practical

cooperation and providing talent resources for multilateral communication and collaborative development [5].

3. Predicaments Existing in the Cultivation of International Students in China

3.1. Disconnection between Chinese-Language Teaching and Professional Courses, Insufficient Academic-Chinese Support

Quite a number of universities implement language training and professional teaching as two separate modules, producing a “two-layered” phenomenon [4]. Chinese-language instructors seldom possess subject-specific expertise, making it difficult to integrate professional vocabulary and academic scenarios into language courses; meanwhile, many professional teachers assume international students already possess adequate Chinese proficiency, failing to adjust teaching rhythms and assignment requirements for second-language learners [5].

Most universities predominantly offer general Chinese courses, with scarce specialized academic-Chinese modules targeting literature comprehension, thesis composition and academic presentations [4]. Even international students who have passed HSK examinations frequently encounter prominent linguistic barriers in major-related coursework. Difficulties in understanding lectures and finishing academic assignments reduce learning efficiency, trigger academic pressure and generate frustration among student groups [3].

3.2. Noticeable Cross-cultural Adaptation Barriers and Imperfect Support-service Systems

Many international students experience cross-cultural shock upon arrival in China, manifested in life adaptation, interpersonal interaction and cultural cognition [3]. A large proportion of international students tend to form closed social circles limited to compatriots, lacking in-depth communication with local Chinese students, which constrains their authentic understanding of Chinese society [2].

From the institutional perspective of universities, systematic pre-arrival orientation and on-campus cross-cultural training remain insufficient [6]. Academic tutoring, multilingual psychological counseling, legal consultation and daily-life assistance are fragmented. When confronted with academic confusion, cultural conflicts or psychological stress, international students cannot obtain timely and targeted support [3]. The absence of whole-process adaptive guidance turns cross-cultural adjustment into a key bottleneck restricting overall training quality [7].

3.3. Defective Curriculum System and Single-Dimensional Quality-Evaluation Mechanism

In terms of curriculum provision, numerous universities directly copy talent-training schemes designed for local Chinese students without adaptive revisions considering international students' prior educational backgrounds and developmental needs [4]. Courses combining Chinese social realities, local culture and specialized disciplines are insufficient, while practical teaching links such as internships, field investigations and social practice remain limited, resulting in disconnection between theoretical instruction and practical application [5].

For quality assessment, course scores and degree completion constitute the dominant evaluation criteria [1]. Evaluation frameworks overlook dimensions including cross-cultural communication capacity, cultural cognition and practical performance [6]. Long-term alumni-tracking mechanisms are absent; without feedback on graduates' employment and development, universities cannot dynamically revise training programs according to real-world educational outcomes [7].

4. Optimization Paths for the Cultivation of International Students in China

4.1. Promote Teaching Reform and Realize Organic Integration of Language and Professional Education

Construct a tiered teaching system combining general Chinese and academic-Chinese instruction [4]. Mandatory academic-Chinese courses shall be delivered for degree-seeking international students, focusing on professional-literature reading, academic-thesis writing and oral presentation competencies to compensate students' academic-language deficiencies [5]. Language teachers and disciplinary instructors conduct collective lesson preparation to embed professional scenarios into Chinese-language teaching. Within professional classrooms, teaching pace, assignment formats and assessment modes shall be appropriately adjusted considering international students' characteristics as second-language learners [1].

Develop characteristic curriculum modules with Chinese-context features [7]. Based on core major courses, offer elective courses concerning Chinese society, culture and practical development cases closely related to respective disciplines. Diversified practical platforms shall be established through cooperation with enterprises, communities and research institutes to develop internship, investigation and social-practice projects for international students, mitigating over-reliance on theoretical classroom teaching and advancing theory-practice integration [2].

4.2. Improve Whole-Process Support Services to Facilitate Cross-cultural Adaptation

Implement multi-stage adaptive education: launch online pre-arrival orientation prior to students' entry into China, popularizing Chinese living customs, campus regulations and safety knowledge [3]; organize post-enrollment cross-cultural adaptation lectures and exchange salons to help international students properly handle cultural differences [6]. Build mixed-interaction mechanisms including Chinese-foreign student peer-pairing programs, multicultural festivals, volunteer activities and club events, breaking closed compatriot-centered social networks and expanding channels for intercultural contact [2].

Construct comprehensive student-support systems: set up specialized academic tutoring, multilingual psychological counseling, legal and daily-life consultation channels [3]. Assign academic tutors for international students to maintain regular communication and deliver targeted guidance for academic confusion and life-related difficulties [5]. Pay close attention to students' mental-health conditions, relieve cross-cultural anxiety, and foster an inclusive and friendly multicultural campus atmosphere [7].

4.3. Construct Diversified Quality Evaluation and Improve Quality-Guarantee Mechanisms

Transform the simplistic evaluation mode centered merely on course examinations and degree acquisition [1]. Establish multi-dimensional evaluation systems covering professional knowledge, academic-Chinese proficiency, practical capability and cross-cultural accomplishment [6]. Combine process-oriented assessment and summative evaluation, attaching importance to students' performance in social practice and cross-cultural activities rather than written-examination scores alone [4].

Build whole-process quality-monitoring mechanisms [7]. Strictly enforce admission criteria to realize "rigorous admission and standardized graduation", avoiding enrollment-scale expansion at the cost of educational quality [5]. Develop graduate-feedback channels to track alumni employment and developmental conditions, collect training-effect feedback and dynamically revise talent-training schemes. Meanwhile, strengthen faculty training for

international education to enhance instructors’ cross-cultural teaching awareness and competence, providing institutional safeguards for high-quality international-student education [2].

Table 1 Comparison of Three International-student Cultivation Modes

Number	Simple Copy of Chinese-student Training Mode	Quantity-oriented Enrollment Expansion Mode	Quality-centered Systematic Cultivation Mode
1	Curriculum directly copied from local students	Emphasis on enrollment number, curriculum adjustment insufficient	Language-professional integrated adaptive curriculum system
2	Lack of academic Chinese courses	General Chinese only, ignoring academic-language demand	General Chinese + academic Chinese tiered teaching
3	Evaluation focus: course scores and credits	Pursue degree completion rate, loose assessment	Multi-dimensional evaluation: major, language, practice and cross-cultural competence
4	Few cross-cultural support services	Fragmented management, passive response to student demands	Whole-process adaptive guidance, diversified multicultural exchange platforms

Through comparative analysis of the three cultivation modes in Table 1, it can be observed that the first two modes cannot satisfy the requirements of high-quality international-student education [7]. Only the systematic cultivation mode centered on training quality, integrating teaching reform, comprehensive support service and multi-dimensional quality evaluation, can effectively resolve realistic dilemmas and achieve the educational objective of cultivating high-level international talents who understand and be friendly to China [1].

5. Summary

The cultivation of international students in China represents a long-term systematic project for higher-education opening-up [5]. Faced with practical challenges such as disconnection between language and professional teaching, insufficient cross-cultural adaptive support and single-sided quality-evaluation mechanisms, universities must abandon the mindset of prioritizing quantity over quality and take high-quality talent cultivation as the core objective [7]. By promoting integrated language-and-professional teaching, improving whole-process student-support services, and constructing diversified quality-evaluation and guarantee mechanisms, universities can enhance international students’ professional capabilities, linguistic literacy and comprehensive cross-cultural accomplishment [3]. Such measures help international students form objective understandings of China during their overseas learning experience, and give full play to the unique value of international-student education in Sino-foreign people-to-people exchanges and the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind [2].

In future international-student education practice, universities shall continuously optimize training procedures responding to students' actual demands, advance the connotative development of the "Study in China" brand, and cultivate more outstanding international talents equipped with professional competence, cross-cultural vision and friendship toward China [6].

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