

A Study on International Engagement and Expression Ability Training of Talents in Cultural Industries under the Belt and Road Initiative--A Case Study of Higher Vocational Colleges of Cultural Industries

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Abstract: The concept of the Belt and Road Initiative was first proposed by the Chinese government in 2013, contributing to both China's trade and cultural development. However, this also created more severe and realistic challenges to the international engagement and expression of talents in cultural industries. The cultivation of these talents is limited by the geographical locations of higher vocational colleges of cultural industries and their local economies. Therefore, these colleges should innovate their training models to better match the local conditions to overcome the challenges. They need to strengthen the construction of teaching materials, introduce the dual cooperative education system of vocational education and enterprises, innovate the teaching methods, and make good use of the available guidance and incentive mechanisms. They also need to help talents raise their awareness of international engagements and expressions and enhance their sensitivity and adaptability to multiple cultures. Most importantly, colleges of cultural industries should help improve talents' expression abilities to achieve effective interactions and communications between cultural industries in the true sense, with cultural industries as the content and language as the means, and make joint efforts to develop the Initiative.

Keywords: The Belt and Road Initiative; Talents in cultural industries; International engagements and expressions

1. Research Background

The Belt and Road Initiative (B&R) -- China's proposal to build a Silk Economic Belt and a 21st Century Maritime Silk Road in cooperation with related nations -- was unveiled by President Xi Jinping during his visits to Central and Southwest Asia in September and October 2013. With the historical symbol of the Silk Road, the Initiative expands and deepens China's opening to the outside world, which enables the rest of the world to know China and promotes the communication and exchange of Chinese culture worldwide by increasing its appeal^[1]. In the context of globalization, China is moving from a land of grand culture to one with a strong socialist culture. To this end, we need to strengthen cultural confidence, promote the development of cultural industries, and improve the international engagement and expression ability of talents in these industries^[2]. As an essential part of education in our country, higher vocational colleges should follow the overall strategic plan of the Initiative advocated by the state, which is responsible for carrying forward fine Chinese culture and boosting its education. Also, the colleges should seize the opportunity to cultivate international talents, strengthen their international engagement and expression abilities to effectively communicate China's stories, disseminate our fine cultural traditions, and thus promote the better development of China's cultural industries and economy.

2. International Engagement and Expression Training Models for Talents in Cultural Industries

Under the Initiative by the state, domestic higher vocational colleges quickly responded, reflected the international trend and started the international engagement and expression ability training of talents in cultural industries. Previous research has shown that they mainly adopt four standard training models, including English Language Teaching, International Communication, and Student Exchange Program.

2.1 English Language Teaching

In this model, teachers add some materials related to cultural industries to lesson preparation in their English language teaching. However, due to the heavy teaching load in higher vocational colleges, most teachers have little time to cover English for cultural industries or, if possible, even briefly mention the content in class after completing the required teaching tasks. Existing English textbooks

are relatively fixed and lack content related to B&R and cultural industries, failing to be updated simultaneously with the actual events, thus limiting the learning resources of students. Some higher vocational colleges have added the content of cultural industries to the English curriculum and increased its assessment in the final examination, which unfortunately, however, only accounts for about 2%.

2.2 International Communications Program

Based on the higher vocational colleges' International Exchange and Cooperation Office, short-term communication programs are organized for students attending colleges in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, and other countries along "the Belt and Road". The communication activities tend to be unidimensional and are mainly arranged by foreign colleges and universities. Students participating in the program complain that the activities are lacking in content and almost void in in-depth communication. As the program is generally aimed at target grades and groups, it is difficult for students in non-cultural industries to participate. What's more, many students say they are unaware of such exchange activities in their schools due to the poor publicity for such programs. Furthermore, the cost of attending the program may be beyond what the average family can afford.

2.3 Student Exchange Program

Based on the cooperative programs, higher vocational colleges will arrange an annual group of students to the places mentioned above along "the Belt and Road" for 1-2 years. The selected students need to meet three requirements. First, they should have strong listening and speaking skills with CET-4 or CET-6. Second, their all-around performance in other subjects ranks one of the top 30 in their grades in addition to English. Third, they can afford the cost of one- or two-year studying abroad with the support of their family. Most students consider it an attractive but unreachable program with these requirements, and only a few students are eligible to participate in it. Moreover, the program has come to a standstill since the global outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus at the end of 2019 and only some of the colleges have tentatively offered online activities for students to experience exchange learning.

3. The Research Status of the International Engagement and Expression of Cultural Industrial Talents

To ensure the representativeness and effectiveness of the research, the author conducted online questionnaires that were distributed through the small program questionnaire star for students of cultural industrial major from 2016 to 2021, English teachers and full-time teachers from three vocational colleges of cultural industry. 360 questionnaires were retrieved from students and 33 questionnaires were retrieved from teachers. Through the investigation and analysis, the author found the following problems:

3.1 The Weak Subjective Awareness of International Cultural Engagement and Expression of Cultural Industrial Students

Currently, most students taking English or specialized courses are to get professional certificates and diplomas rather than spreading Chinese culture to the rest of the world. Among the students questionnaires, 60% of them entirely agreed that the purpose of studying English and professional courses is to obtain a certificate, while only 24.4% of them disagreed with this view. At the same time, only 27.8% of the students fully agreed that the purpose of international engagement and expression is for the international dissemination of culture and the development of cultural industries. From the above data, it is evident that nowadays, students still hold that passing exam is to obtain certificates. They know little about "The Belt and Road Initiative" policies, so it's hard for them to distinguish the cultural differences between China and countries along "The Belt and Road".^[3]

3.2 For the Students of Cultural Industries, Teachers did not Pay Enough Attention to the Cultivation of International Engagement and Expression Ability

Teachers' teaching has not changed significantly on students of the cultural industries, and it is still based on traditional teaching. Among the number of teachers surveyed, about 30% of the teachers admitted that their English classes are mainly for traditional vocabulary teaching, grammar teaching and text teaching, and only 18.2% of the teachers will explain the background knowledge of the cultural industry. At the same time, not enough attention was paid to the cultivation of students' international engagement and expression ability. Only 27.3% of teachers attached great importance to cultivating students' abilities in this area.

3.3 The College Failed To Build a Good Platform For Internal Engagement And Expression Of Cultural Industrial Talents

When we introduced the international engagement and expression training model for talents in cultural industries under "the Belt and Road Initiative", we mentioned that the common platforms that higher vocational colleges build for students to participate in and express internationally are international communication program, student exchange program and school-enterprise cooperation. The three

platforms before the global pandemic were barely available for the students. However, as the global COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing, it is difficult for the schools to carry out their platforms and students can no longer be provided with practical opportunities in real scenarios.

4. Reform Measures for the Cultivation of Cultural Industries Talents are Oriented by International Engagement and Expression under the Belt And Road Initiative

4.1 The Content of Cultural Industry should be Better Integrated into Teaching Materials

Under “the Belt and Road Initiative”, higher vocational colleges of the cultural industries should accelerate the cultivation of cultural industries talents who are oriented by international engagement and expression. First of all, in-depth research on the teaching materials, and increase cultural content. Cultural content has been added to the current English teaching materials. The school should organize an expert team to appropriately delete and integrate the English teaching materials for higher vocational education, increase the background knowledge of “the Belt and Road”, and add the relevant cultural knowledge of the countries along “the Belt and Road” according to the text content. Second, classify, organize, and formulate loose-leaf teaching materials. After the syllabus of the textbook is determined, teachers can be assigned to sort out according to the principle of one lesson, one culture. After the sorting is completed, the loose-leaf textbook and the corresponding PPT for the school are formulated according to the textbook template, and they are applied to the freshmen's grade to test the effect. After the end of the semester, the teaching materials will be revised and supplemented. Finally, invite experts to examine and approve teaching materials, strengthening the construction of teaching materials. Higher vocational colleges can carry out consultation meetings on English loose-leaf textbooks for the cultural industries, and invite experts and scholars of English and cultural industries to participate in the meeting. At the meeting, a special report on the school's loose-leaf textbooks can be conducted first, and then teachers and students have a symposium. After the meeting, the group has a discussion. Finally experts and scholars put forward revision opinions on the loose-leaf materials. In this way, it can not only improve the theoretical basis of the teaching materials, but also allow the construction of teaching materials to continue to develop in depth, and help the international engagement and expression of cultural industries students.

4.2 Using the Dual Model of Educating to Cultivate the International Engagement and Expression Ability of Talents in Cultural Industries in Dustries

First, emphasize the integration of cultural backgrounds and cultivate the awareness of international engagement and expression of cultural industries talents. Through special interpretations, class meetings, videos, symposiums and other methods, let the students in the school understand and be familiar with the background, implementation path and current implementation of China's “the Belt and Road” policies, enhance students' cultural accomplishment, and stimulate their cultural self-confidence. Let the students know that in the current era, their first task is to convey China's excellent traditional culture. They are cultural ambassadors and they represent the image of China. They should actively participate in international activities, strengthen their oral expression, and let more people in countries along the “the Belt and Road” understand Chinese culture.^[4] Second, carry out a dual mode of education, and to develop professional skills and cultural industries talents in a two-pronged approach. Students in cultural industries colleges should not only study professional courses, but also cultivate knowledge of cultural industries. Students should know what is the cultural industries, what is the current status of the cultural industries in China, and what are the learning goals and directions of students in the cultural industries, so that they can take the initiative to participate in international engagement and expression training activities. Schools should actively carry out a dual education mode, incorporate the cultivation of cultural industries into teaching plans, rationally plan curriculum settings, and the ratio of teachers. Students should start with theoretical study, to consolidate their knowledge, and then combine them with professional courses through other channels and platforms for practical training.

4.3 Strengthening the Innovation of Teaching Mode, and Enhance the Practical Ability of International Engagement and Expression of Talents in Cultural Industries

The existing traditional teaching mode can no longer meet the training objectives of cultural industries talents in higher vocational colleges, and it is urgent to strengthen the innovation of teaching mode. On the one hand, higher vocational colleges with teachers, platforms and conditions can be encouraged to offer courses related to international expression of cultural industries as soon as possible,

organize a team of experts and excellent front-line backbone teachers to formulate relevant curriculum standards first, plan the curriculum settings on the loose-leaf textbooks that have been integrated, conduct all-round training, and start pilot work in the freshman grade. At the same time, an experienced team of experts can be hired for guidance. The test process can be divided into three stages, each stage can be subject to 3 months. After each stage is completed, the students' expressions need to be tested accordingly. After passing the test, the next stage will proceed. Based on the relevant courses for the international expression of the cultural industries, the experiment can be carried constantly so that the schools can learn from the strengths and complement the weaknesses; on the other hand, it is recommended that higher vocational colleges that lack teachers, platforms and conditions, and that are not mature should first conduct pilot work in English teaching. After communicating with the English teaching and research group to unify the thinking, one international expression course in the cultural industries can be added every week based on the original English teaching plan. Teachers are required to pass training before teaching. Teachers create scenarios in the classroom, and according to the arrangement of teaching progress, increase students' ability of English listening and speaking ability in cultural industries, so that students can accumulate and express more. Teaching mode can be innovated to carry out online and offline blended teaching. Students first conduct online learning, pass the online test, and then enter the actual classroom offline. Classroom learning is a process of review, consolidation and improvement before application. And this part of the academic achievement can be considered to be included into students' final exam. By strengthening the innovation of teaching mode, schools will be able to improve the practical ability of international engagement and expression of talents in the cultural industries.

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