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Current Situation and Implementation Paths of International Understanding Education in Local Application-oriented Universities

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Abstract It is urgent and necessary to implement international understanding education in local application-oriented colleges and universities. Improving the international competitiveness of talents and cultivating global citizens is one of the goals of higher education. This paper discussed the problems of international understanding education in local application-oriented colleges and universities, including weak policy orientation, insufficient practical exploration, aphasia of national culture, *etc.* It is recommended to implement the international understanding education from two ways: subject penetration and project-based professional courses. In addition, the introduction of Chinese culture cannot be ignored to prevent the absence of national culture in cross-cultural communication.

Key words Local application-oriented universities, International understanding education, Higher education, Global citizen, Cultural confidence

1 Introduction

International understanding education is the conception proposed and promoted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1946 to solve world problems such as environment, population and biodiversity after the World War II and promote international understanding education in the context of people all over the world calling for peace and cooperation. From then on, international understanding education became an educational concept to promote world peace and harmonious development of mankind and gradually developed. With the increasing internationalization of human communication, higher education must implement international understanding education to enable students to recognize and learn how to deal with the conflicts and contradictions that exist in the coexistence of people with different cultures and values.

2 Relationship between international understanding education and higher education

International understanding education is an educational concept that emerged and developed under the advocacy and promotion of international organizations after the World War II for the purpose of solving world problems such as environment, popula-

tion, and biodiversity^[1]. International understanding education aims to cultivate high-level talents with international understanding character and international cooperation ability through education, emphasizing mutual respect, mutual understanding and common development between cultures. International understanding education has experienced more than 70 years of development, and has gone through three stages: formation stage, development stage and prosperity stage^[2]. By September 2005, 7 793 educational institutions in 175 countries have joined the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), around a common goal to build peace in the minds of children and young people. Through concrete actions member schools promote the ideals of UNESCO valuing rights and dignity, gender equality, social progress, freedom, justice and democracy, respect for diversity and international solidarity. The Network operates at international and national levels with three clear priorities: education for sustainable development, global citizenship education and inter-cultural and heritage learning. Economic globalization has brought a threat of cultural unity. How to communicate and cooperate with groups of different cultures and values in the context of globalization is a problem that cannot be ignored for China's higher education.

The first goal of international understanding education is to make students realize that with the increasing internationalization of human communication, conflicts and contradictions exist in the coexistence of people with different cultures and values. Secondly, it is to let students understand that one of the four pillars of world education in the new era, "Learning to Coexist", has set goals for global education, and that practicing and learning is the responsibility and obligation entrusted to the young generation by the era. Education must develop the ability to recognize and accept the values that exist in different individuals, men and women, peoples and cultures, and to develop the ability to communicate, share and cooperate with others. Education must develop the capacity

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for non-violent conflict resolution. Therefore, education should also promote the cultivation of an inner view of peace in the minds of students, so that they can more firmly form the qualities of tolerance, compassion and mutual concern^[3]. Therefore, China's higher education must examine its own educational issues from the perspective of world education, and attach importance to the education of international understanding for young students. The goal of higher education should include improving the civilized quality and value consciousness of individual subjects, and cultivating the thinking and behavior of harmonious coexistence of individuals.

3 Current situation of international understanding education at the stage of higher education in local application-oriented colleges and universities

3.1 Weak national policy orientation As early as July 2010, the State Council has promulgated the *National Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010 – 2020)*, which proposed to "strengthen international understanding education and enhance students' knowledge and understanding of different countries and cultures. Despite this, there has been no policy document in line with the outline in the higher education stage, facing the reality of insufficient administrative orientation. In the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, many colleges and universities have begun to recruit teachers globally, and the education of international students has also continued to develop. The differences in the process of internationalization and the diversified educational atmosphere must make colleges and universities aware of the necessity and urgency of conducting international understanding education for college students, and must issue relevant policy documents as soon as possible to guide teachers to carry out international understanding education.

3.2 Insufficient practical research in colleges and universities At present, there are more and more researches on international understanding education in China's higher education stage. Professor Jiang Yingmin from International Understanding Education Research Center of Institute of International and Comparative Education (IICE) at Beijing Normal University systematically studied the development stages of international understanding education, and sorted out the international understanding education policies and implementation situation of UNESCO and some countries in the world, especially Japan, South Korea, the United States, Australia, Canada and other countries in East Asia, which provides a solid theoretical foundation and a macro perspective for higher education to carry out research on international understanding education. Other scholars^[4], such as Xu Hui, Zhao Zhongjian, Yu Xin, and Guo Feng, also wrote papers about the relevant theoretical background of international understanding education, and tried to construct international understanding education strategies for universities. The textbook *Education for International Understanding* written by Weng Wenyan was published in 2007. Generally speaking, the research on international understanding education at the higher education stage basically stays at

the introduction of the background, concept, goal and content of international understanding education. There are not many studies on the penetration practice in subjects or courses, and there is also a lack of analysis of the current situation of international understanding education in China's localized communication education. Therefore, the research on international understanding education urgently needs more practical exploration.

3.3 Aphasia in the native culture In the process of implementing the international understanding education, college students have exposed a very serious problem, that is, the absence of their own national culture and the phenomenon of aphasia. In international understanding education, in addition to understanding the other party's science, technology and social culture, the dissemination and introduction of the nation's values is equally important and should not be ignored. At present, when many college students mention China's traditional culture and contemporary socialist core values, they generally lack momentum and collectively lose their voice. This fully reflects that in higher education, especially English language education in colleges and universities, the proportion of native culture teaching is far from meeting the needs of intercultural communication, and it is a weak link in the development of international understanding education.

4 Recommendations for local application-oriented colleges and universities to implement international understanding education

The implementation of international understanding education in local application-oriented colleges and universities must face up to the background of globalization, and explore localization implementation methods on the premise of not violating the purpose of world peace launched by UNESCO. The relevant functional departments of the government should examine the formulation of relevant policies on international understanding education from the macro perspective of world education, and guide higher education to carry out the practice and exploration of international understanding education as soon as possible. In addition, local application-oriented colleges and universities can also start from the following ways to implement international education.

4.1 Infiltrating international understanding education into subject teaching In subject teaching, the infiltration of international understanding education through course learning is the most convenient and effective way, because students can gradually implant the concept of international understanding education in professional learning and implement it in subject practice. Taking the major of tourism as an example, in the courses of scenic spot planning, students can learn and think about how to carry out international design in scenic spots to build more international elements to contribute to the world development, and make students learn how to dig deep into their own cultural characteristics while catching up with internationalization, improve the localization characteristics of scenic spots, and be alert to the impact of globalization. For another example, in tour guide communication courses,

students can be shown tour guide service cases that contain cultural conflicts, so that students can understand foreign cultures in the cases, cultivate language communication skills and psychological harmony skills in foreign work, and learn to be harmonious with people from different cultures. Another example is the college English course, as a public basic course, college English course is an important language tool for international understanding education. Therefore, the entire teaching process can implement the concept of international understanding education, explain shared values such as peace, respect, friendship, cooperation, tolerance, and freedom from all levels, guide students into a world of great harmony, and enable students to have a more open and broad vision.

4.2 Carrying forward China's excellent traditional culture and enhancing China's cultural confidence

The input and output of Chinese culture cannot be ignored in international understanding education. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: The excellent traditional Chinese culture is the outstanding advantage of the Chinese nation and our deepest cultural soft power. If Chinese culture is ignored in international understanding education, some college students will lack the foundation of communication in the process of cross-cultural communication, resulting in asymmetric communication. At present, some college students lack traditional cultural knowledge, lack of traditional cultural literacy, and even have moral anomie. One of the reasons is that the multiculturalism brought about by globalization has impacted some college students' aesthetic, moral and value judgment systems. Some college students turn a blind eye to traditional classics, are indifferent to history and culture, and have weak ability to dialectically analyze international culture. One of the missions of college and university education is cultural inheritance. Higher education must make good use of ideological and political education classrooms to promote the core values of socialism and Chinese civilization and etiquette by teaching traditional Chinese culture. It is necessary to sort out a clear Chinese cultural system among college students, build a clear idea of cultural and historical development, establish a clear self-cultural positioning and sense of mission, and make spreading Chinese culture and socialist core values the ideal and belief of the younger generation. At the same time, with the help of traditional Chinese classics and Chinese and foreign cultures, Chinese culture and values are introduced into English classrooms, and by infiltrating the problems and situational settings of international understanding education concepts, students can be rooted in their national culture and form in cross-cultural comparative learning and construction.

4.3 Expanding the frontier of international understanding education and strengthening the practice of international cultural interaction

Local application-oriented colleges and universities can take advantage of the favorable conditions for carrying out education for international students to offer cultural interaction

courses between international students and Chinese students, providing a platform for Chinese and foreign students to understand and accept each other. The course may adopt a flexible project-based teaching mode, so that Chinese and foreign students can understand each other's social culture, life attitude, ethics and other aspects through media such as movies, music, and artwork. Besides, the course may carry out dialogue and communication on certain topics, and reflect on the national culture in the process of communication and interaction, so as to further commit to cultural integration and coexistence. This type of course is not limited to the inherent teaching mode, but requires teachers to carefully design the course content and properly guide and manage classroom discussions, improve students' communication skills, broaden students' thinking, and enhance students' "cultural intelligence", rather than the merely emotional intelligence.

5 Conclusions

With the continuous deepening of the internationalization process of colleges and universities and the continuous development of international student education, diversified education for college students is the proposition and opportunity given to higher education by the times. Therefore, the international understanding education should be aimed at the current problems of Chinese higher education, through subject penetration, cultural interaction, multicultural experience, *etc.*, to implement the goal of education in cultivating students' essential qualities of "global citizens". Students should be equipped with the knowledge, abilities and attitudes they should have as a member of the global society, country, region and nature, and at the same time have a sense of responsibility as a national citizen, to strive to solve domestic problems brought about by globalization, and make due contributions to building a sustainable world and country. It is hoped that the younger generation in China can establish cultural confidence, conduct interpersonal communication harmoniously in the cross-cultural field, and no longer be uneasy and at a loss when they step onto the international stage.

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