

Implementation of Grassroots Teaching Organization Construction in English Majors within the Context of New Liberal Arts Education

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Abstract: With the development of New Liberal Arts Education, more attention is paid to the construction of grassroots teaching organizations of English major, which lays a solid foundation for the cultivation of practical and skilled talents. This paper focuses on four aspects: cross-cultural communication ability, interdisciplinary teaching ability, ability to spreading Chinese culture and values in English, and the ability to master new technologies and apply them to teaching practice. Through analyzing these four aspects, this paper provides suggestions for the construction of English major grassroots teaching organizations under the context of New Liberal Arts Education.

1. Introduction

Developing practical and skilled talents is the core objective of higher education in China. With the advancement of new liberal arts education, there is increased emphasis on fostering students' diverse abilities and comprehensive qualities. English major, as a significant discipline in higher education, has always played a crucial role in nurturing globally competent individuals. To enhance the progress of English major within the context of new liberal arts education, it becomes imperative to strengthen the establishment of grassroots teaching organizations for English majors. This article will primarily focus on four dimensions of cultivating English major teachers' capabilities, which includes cross-cultural communication skills, interdisciplinary teaching proficiency, ability to convey Chinese culture and values in English, and proficiency in utilizing

new technologies for effective teaching practices.

2. Literature Review

In the context of the rapid development of new technologies, the construction of traditional liberal arts majors has encountered strong challenges, and the development of liberal arts majors requires a new turn, so the concept of "new liberal arts" came into being and set off a lot of discussions.

As a hot new higher education concept after "new engineering", "new liberal arts" has produced strong repercussions in liberal arts faculties in domestic institutions of higher learning since it appeared in many policies of higher education in China in 2018. What is the "New Liberal Arts"? How does the 'new liberal arts' differ from the traditional liberal arts? How to achieve the magnificent transformation of traditional liberal arts into "new liberal arts"? All of them have become problems that urgently need to be considered and solved by higher education workers. It is foreseeable that the upcoming construction of the "new liberal arts" will inevitably become an important opportunity and key for the humanities and social sciences to actively respond to social needs in the current technological and economic background. How to build English majors in the context of the "new liberal arts" has also aroused extensive discussion in the academic circles and achieved certain research results.

Wu argues that for developing the education of English as a major, in addition to conducting in-depth research in theory, in the practice of professional construction, continuously deepened reform of new liberal arts majors is also needed to meet the new needs of social development, the new trend of interdisciplinary integration, the application of new scientific research achievements, and strengthen curriculum construction. Embrace technology and value change in teaching practice[1]. Yan & Zheng emphasize the importance of carefully exploring the origin and connotation of the concept of "new liberal arts", and the careful consideration of the concept of "new liberal arts" to guide the "mutual promotion" relationship between the majors and students, the "interaction" relationship between teachers and students in the classroom, and the "integration" relationship between theoretical literacy and practical ability in the teaching system, so as to make positive responses and beneficial attempts to the connotative development of liberal arts majors[2].

Heffner et al. proposed to apply engaged scholarship in liberal arts college education and they found that such practice played an important role in cultivating students to become more competent in their ability[3].

Bonney argues that trans-disciplinarity and innovation are the keys to serve as a catalyst for revolutionizing liberal arts education, thus he encourages educators to reshape their curriculum to foster learning communities equipped with a wide range of approaches, knowledge, and technology, all aimed at addressing real-world problems[4].

Smith puts forth the idea that modern liberal arts education should emphasize two crucial elements. In addition to equipping students with the skills needed to excel academically, college educators should also provide them with ample knowledge and real-world practice to thrive outside the economic sphere, ultimately fostering their overall human development[5].

In their exploration of a career planning course at a college, Stebleton et al. identified the value of incorporating liberal arts education models. These models were found to offer students not only core competencies but also powerful tools for achieving success[6].

As for applying new technology into education, many teaching experiments have been initiated and some findings have been achieved. Aitken developed the awareness of using digital technology in teaching practice and achieved obvious effects[7]. Fuchs utilized quantitative analysis to study the effectiveness of the flipped classroom, which is featured and supported by digital technology[8].

Mason, et al studied the active learning in flipped classroom and tutorials and they found such learning mode can be regarded more as complementary than as redundant[9]. Reitan et al did the research aiming to comprehend the COVID-19 driven changes in digital education and their implications for the future, by examining both the challenges and opportunities presented. Their data suggests that the process of creating and delivering courses which blend online and in-person teaching is intricate and demands adaptability and innovation[10].

In their study, Logan & Curry examined the practicality and effectiveness of liberal arts education using diverse case studies from multiple countries. They asserted that liberal arts education exhibits a remarkable ability to transcend temporal and cultural boundaries, adapt to the changing social needs of different generations, and withstand repeated predictions of its extinction[11].

Coy & Hancock propose that to enrich the liberal arts education, faculty curriculum committees and university administrators need to actively acknowledge the significance of incorporating peace and conflict studies courses into their institution's liberal arts education requirements[12].

Kaiser et al. highlight the striking resemblance between the goals of a liberal arts education and undergraduate research. They suggest that instructors can enhance the attainment of these goals by incorporating an undergraduate research focus within a liberal arts setting[13].

The purpose of this essay is to examine the measures that teachers organized into teaching groups can implement in order to promote the quality of teaching English majors in the emerging field of liberal arts education. This topic will be illustrated from the following aspects.

3. Four Aspects to Foster Teachers' Abilities under the Context of New Liberal Arts Education

Under the context of the New Liberal Arts, grassroots teaching organizations in the English major should assist teachers in enhancing their cross-cultural awareness, in order to better improve the quality of English education and cultivate talents in the field of English. In order to foster teaching quality of English major from the perspective of constructing grassroot teaching constitutions, four aspects should be emphasized.

3.1. Aspect One: Develop English Teachers' Cross-cultural Communication Ability

In an increasingly interconnected and diverse world, fostering teachers' intercultural communication skills is crucial for promoting global understanding and effective education. The grassroot teaching organization should help the educators of English majors to explore strategies and approaches for cultivating their intercultural communication abilities, enabling them to engage with diverse students and build inclusive learning environments. One way to achieve such goal is to enact Professional Development Programs. Establishing professional development programs dedicated to intercultural communication can play a pivotal role in enhancing educators' skills. These programs should include workshops, seminars, and training sessions conducted by experts in intercultural communication. Topics to cover might include cultural awareness, sensitivity, building intercultural relationships, and effective communication strategies in diverse settings.

At the same time, the grassroot teaching organizations of English major should provide necessary cultural immersion experiences for the educators. Providing opportunities for teachers to immerse themselves in different cultural contexts can significantly enhance their intercultural communication skills. Encouraging teachers to participate in cultural exchange programs, visit diverse communities, or attend international conferences exposes them to various perspectives, customs, and communication styles. This firsthand experience can promote empathy, understanding, and adaptability.

Another way to build up the cross-cultural ability for teachers of English major is to form

collaborative partnerships. Building collaborative partnerships with educational institutions and teachers from different countries can enhance intercultural communication among educators. Establishing virtual exchange programs or organizing joint projects with international schools can foster cross-cultural dialogue amongst teachers. These partnerships facilitate sharing insights, practices, and experiences, ultimately enriching intercultural perspectives.

Encouraging teachers to engage in self-reflection is an effective approach to enhancing their intercultural communication skills. Encouraging them to critically analyze their own biases, assumptions, and communication styles fosters greater understanding and self-awareness. Journaling, peer feedback, and regular reflection sessions can be employed to promote continuous growth and development.

Integrating intercultural communication skills into pre-service and in-service teacher education is essential. Teacher education programs should incorporate modules or courses that focus explicitly on intercultural communication. These modules should address cultural competence, communication strategies, and intercultural sensitivity, preparing teachers to navigate diverse classrooms effectively.

Cultivating teachers' intercultural communication skills is vital for fostering inclusive educational environments. By providing professional development programs, immersive experiences, collaborative partnerships, reflective practices, integrating intercultural skills into teacher education, we can empower teachers to effectively engage with diverse students, celebrate cultural diversity, and cultivate global citizenship.

Another strategy that grassroots teaching organizations in the English major can employ to help their teachers navigate education in the context of new liberal arts is cultivating their ability to teach across different disciplines.

In our rapidly evolving world, the traditional boundaries between academic disciplines are becoming increasingly blurred. This has led to the rise of interdisciplinary studies and the need for teachers to possess interdisciplinary teaching abilities. In the English major, teaching organization should prioritize the development of such abilities among their educators in order to prepare students for the demands of the modern workforce and to foster a broader understanding of knowledge.

3.2. Aspect Two: Foster Interdisciplinary Teaching in the English Major

In the context of new liberal arts education, the English major is no longer confined to the study of literature alone; it has morphed into a diversified field incorporating different areas like linguistics, cultural studies, and communication. Therefore, English major teachers must possess the ability to seamlessly integrate these various disciplines into their teaching. This interdisciplinary approach can deepen students' understanding of the subject matter, promote critical thinking, and encourage them to make connections between different knowledge domains.

In today's job market, employers seek candidates who can think critically, adapt to change, and solve complex problems. Traditional disciplinary boundaries no longer define workplaces, and employees are expected to possess a range of skills relevant to multiple fields. By incorporating interdisciplinary teaching approaches, English major teachers can equip students with the ability to navigate different knowledge domains, fostering creativity, adaptability, and problem-solving skills that are highly valued in professional settings.

Interdisciplinary teaching in the English major can encourage students to view a topic or issue from various perspectives. By demonstrating how multiple disciplines contribute to the study of English, teachers can help students grasp the interconnectedness of knowledge and appreciate the complexity of real-world issues. This holistic understanding transcends narrow disciplinary

boundaries and cultivates well-rounded individuals who can engage critically with diverse perspectives and cross-cultural contexts.

Interdisciplinary teaching approaches in the English major can promote collaborative learning environments. Through group projects, discussions, and debates that involve different disciplines, students develop teamwork, cooperation, and effective communication skills. Such collaboration mimics real-world scenarios where professionals from various backgrounds come together to tackle complex challenges. Moreover, interdisciplinary teaching can foster innovation by encouraging students to think creatively and to leverage different disciplinary tools and methodologies to address societal problems.

3.3. Aspect Three: Develop the ability to spread Chinese Culture and Value in English

In the context of new liberal arts education, teaching organization in the English major should prioritize the development of interdisciplinary teaching abilities among their educators. By doing so, we can better prepare students for the demands of the modern workforce, foster a broader understanding of knowledge, facilitate collaborative learning, and promote innovation. Embracing interdisciplinary approaches will empower both teachers and students with the skills and mindset necessary to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and complex world.

The globalization of the English language has created a demand for English language teachers who possess not only linguistic proficiency but also cultural awareness and sensitivity. In the context of teaching organization in English majors, it is crucial for educators to develop their ability to spread Chinese culture and values in English. This essay explores the significance of nurturing this skill and proposes practical ways to develop it effectively.

3.3.1. Promoting Intercultural Understanding

Teaching organization in English major should aim to foster intercultural understanding among students. By incorporating Chinese culture and values into English language instruction, teachers can bridge the gap between the two cultures and enhance students' appreciation of their Chinese heritage. This promotes cultural diversity, empathy, and mutual respect among students.

3.3.2. Enhancing Chinese Cultural Identity

English majors often face the challenge of maintaining their Chinese cultural identity while studying a foreign language. Teachers should strive to instill a sense of pride and belonging by integrating Chinese culture and values into the curriculum. This helps students develop a strong cultural identity and a sense of self, which they can confidently project when communicating about their culture in English.

3.3.3. Strengthening Communication Skills

The ability to effectively communicate Chinese culture and values in English requires strong communication skills. Teaching organizations should promote interactive and communicative teaching methods that encourage students to discuss and express their views on Chinese cultural topics in English. By doing so, students not only enhance their language proficiency but also develop the ability to articulate and explain cultural aspects effectively.

3.3.4. Expanding Cultural Awareness

Teachers in English major organizations should actively engage in their own professional development to expand their cultural awareness. Participating in workshops, seminars, and cultural exchange programs can expose teachers to various aspects of Chinese culture, traditions, history, and values. Equipped with this knowledge, they can confidently transmit Chinese culture and values to their students, fostering a deeper understanding of Chinese society.

3.3.5. Developing Cross-cultural Teaching Materials

Teaching organizations should encourage the development of authentic and culturally relevant teaching materials. By utilizing Chinese literature, proverbs, historical events, and cultural artifacts, teachers can create engaging and meaningful activities to teach language skills while incorporating Chinese culture. This approach promotes a comprehensive understanding of language and culture, enabling students to develop a deeper connection to their cultural roots.

Teaching organizations in English major play a vital role in nurturing students' understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture and values. It is crucial for teachers to develop the ability to spread Chinese culture in English to promote intercultural understanding, strengthen Chinese cultural identity, enhance communication skills, expand cultural awareness, and create engaging teaching materials. By doing so, English majors will prepare students to become effective communicators and ambassadors of Chinese culture in the global context.

3.4. Aspect Four: Developing abilities for using new technologies in English Teaching

In the digital age, technology has become increasingly pervasive in educational settings. English majors who aspire to become teachers can greatly benefit from developing their ability to master new technologies and effectively apply them to their teaching practice. This essay aims to discuss why teaching organizations in the English major should prioritize the development of technological skills among their teachers and provide strategies to enhance such skills.

Integrating technology in the classroom can enhance student engagement and motivation. The use of multimedia, interactive tools, and digital resources can create a dynamic learning environment that caters to different learning styles and nurtures students' enthusiasm for English language and literature.

Technology allows English teachers to go beyond traditional teaching methods, opening up a wide range of learning opportunities. Online platforms, virtual reality, and simulation tools enable teachers to expose students to authentic language use and cultural experiences that may not be within their immediate reach.

Utilizing technology promotes collaboration among students, enabling them to work together on digital projects, research, and creative assignments. This fosters a sense of community and improves students' communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Technological advancements are rapidly shaping the educational landscape. Teachers who are proficient in using technology are better equipped to navigate online learning environments, adapt to emerging trends, and keep pace with the evolving needs of students.

Here are some strategies for developing technological skills.

3.4.1. Professional Development Programs

English teaching organizations should provide ongoing professional development opportunities for their teachers to learn and master new technologies. Workshops, seminars, and online courses focused on educational technology can equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to integrate technology effectively into their teaching practices.

3.4.2. Collaborative Learning Communities

Creating communities of practice where teachers can collaborate, share ideas, and exchange best practices regarding technology integration will foster a supportive and innovative environment. Peer-to-peer learning can help English teachers explore new technologies, troubleshoot challenges, and develop their skills collectively.

3.4.3. Integration in Teacher Education Programs

English major programs should include courses or modules focused on educational technology in their curriculum. Incorporating technology-related coursework will expose future teachers to various tools, pedagogies, and strategies, preparing them to effectively incorporate technology in their future classrooms.

3.4.4. Mentoring and Support Systems

Establishing mentoring programs or assigning technology mentors to assist and guide English teachers can enhance their confidence and competence in using new technologies. Peer support systems and access to technical support resources will empower teachers to incorporate technology with ease.

4. Conclusion

The conclusion of this academic paper highlights that in order to better cultivate excellent English professionals within the context of new liberal arts education, grassroots teaching organizations in English majors need to focus on enhancing English teachers' cross-cultural abilities, interdisciplinary skills, ability to convey Chinese culture and values in English, and ability to utilize new technologies in English teaching. By improving these capabilities, English majors can be nurtured to become outstanding professionals in the field. With the increasing importance of English in today's interconnected world, it is crucial for English teachers to possess a global mindset and be able to bridge cultural gaps. Moreover, the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge equips students with a broader perspective and enhances their problem-solving abilities. In addition, English teachers should be adept at promoting Chinese culture and values through the medium of English, thereby fostering mutual understanding and appreciation between different cultures. Lastly, incorporating new technologies into English teaching not only makes the learning process more engaging but also prepares students for the digital era. By focusing on these key aspects, grassroots teaching organizations in English majors can effectively cultivate talented individuals who possess both linguistic proficiency and a deep understanding of the cultural nuances necessary for success in the English profession.

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Conflict of Interest

The author states that this article has no conflict of interest.

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