# On the Cultivation Path of Core Competencies for College English Talents Under the Background of New Liberal Arts

XIANYU Jing

Beijing Union University, Beijing, China

This paper elaborates on the approaches to cultivating core competencies for college English talents under the background of New Liberal Arts, focusing on four key aspects: transmitting of Chinese culture in English to cultivate students' cultural confidence in the context of globalization, fostering their interdisciplinary competencies through the crossover of different disciplines and knowledge fusion, utilizing big data and emerging technologies to develop students' language proficiency and autonomous learning abilities, and aligning education with societal needs by integrating theoretical learning with practical teaching, thereby enhancing students' social engagement and problem-solving skills. The study aims to advance the reform of foreign language education in the new era, enhance the competitiveness of future professionals, and guide students toward a sound personal and professional development.

*Keywords:* New Liberal Arts, core competencies, college English, cultivation path

The demand for talents under the background of New Liberal Arts presents new characteristics, posing increasingly complex and diverse challenges for the cultivation of college English talents while also offering broader opportunities for their development. Core competencies are crucial to students' humanistic literacy and lifelong development. Higher education in foreign languages plays a vital role in shaping the future competitiveness and career development of graduates. However, university students still need to enhance their awareness and ability for lifelong learning. In addition, given the complexity of current international affairs and the increasing need for global cooperation to cope with major challenges and promote effective cross-cultural communication, the demand for highly skilled foreign language professionals has become more pressing than ever. Therefore, it is of great significance for universities to reform the teaching paradigm of foreign languages in the context of New Liberal Arts. The definition of core competencies in this paper is primarily based on the *Core Competencies for Chinese Student Development* (released on September 13, 2016), which covers three aspects: cultural literacy, autonomous development, and social engagement. This paper explores four approaches to cultivating core competencies in English talents: The first two focus on enhancing cultural literacy, the third emphasizes fostering students' autonomous development, and the fourth aims to cultivate students' awareness and ability for social engagement.

## Transmitting of Chinese Culture to Cultivate Students' Cultural Literacy and Confidence

Foreign language education has traditionally emphasized linguistic competence and cross-cultural communication.

However, within the framework of the New Liberal Arts, its role has expanded to include the transmission of Chinese cultural values and perspectives to a global audience. The New Liberal Arts initiative calls for strengthening discourse capabilities, enabling English learners to embody Chinese "Four Confidences" in international contexts. In English classrooms, it is essential to integrate both explicit and implicit approaches (Guo & Ma, 2023, p. 66). Explicitly, teachers can introduce elements of Chinese history and traditions, highlighting key aspects of Chinese culture through lectures, reading materials, and structured discussions. Implicitly, cultural values and perspectives can be conveyed through classroom atmosphere, teacher-student interactions, and the integration of culturally relevant examples into language learning. This combined approach helps students develop a deeper appreciation of China by showcasing its historical and modern achievements, as well as its global status and influence.

Currently, some universities have incorporated Chinese culture courses into their English programs, promoting the concept of "telling China's story in English". Students are encouraged to reflect on and articulate their viewpoints following the introduction of China-related topics and issues in class, such as economic development, political systems, environmental protection, and human rights. Teachers play a crucial role in guiding and training students to express and explain Chinese cultural concepts in foreign languages, thereby equipping them for careers in diplomacy, international business, and global communication. In addition, by translating classical Chinese literary works, historical documents, and philosophical writings, students can develop a deeper understanding of traditional Chinese culture. This process facilitates cultural transmission while strengthening students' sense of cultural identity and confidence. Beyond regular coursework, instructors can also recommend research topics related to language and culture for students' graduation theses, helping them cultivate appropriate values.

To develop critical cultural thinking and cross-cultural communication skills, teachers can encourage students to analyze issues presented in English texts from a Chinese perspective. Students should be guided to observe and understand the realities of Chinese society, thereby fostering their intercultural awareness and communicative competence. The curriculum can incorporate reports from foreign media—such as news articles and publications—about China, enabling students to critically examine the underlying cultural perspectives and biases. By comparing and distinguishing between Chinese and Western cultural narratives, students can break free from discourse hegemony and strengthen their confidence in their own cultural identity. Furthermore, analyzing and evaluating cultural and ideological differences can equip students to critically assess foreign theories, viewpoints, and cultural phenomena with greater discernment, thereby enhancing their critical thinking skills and their ability to make informed judgments. In the context of globalization, intercultural communication skills have become essential for English learners in higher education. Students should cultivate an understanding of, and respect for, diverse cultural backgrounds and values, enabling them to communicate and collaborate effectively with people from different cultural contexts. Through comparative and dialectical thinking about cultures, they can enhance their cognitive abilities and further improve their cross-cultural communication competence.

## Diversified Crossover of Different Disciplines and Knowledge Fusion to Cultivate Students' Cross-Disciplinary Competence

In the era of New Liberal Arts, traditional disciplinary boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred, and the intersection and integration of different disciplines have become the norm. This requires English talents not

only to have a strong command of the English language but also develop broad disciplinary knowledge and interdisciplinary thinking skills. They need to be capable of effective communication, collaboration, and innovation in interdisciplinary environments.

Professor Wang Zhuo points out that foreign language discipline inherently possesses both intrinsic and extrinsic interdisciplinary characteristics (Wang, 2018, p. 66). The intrinsic knowledge system is constructed with the integration and intersection of language, literature, and culture, while the extrinsic knowledge system extends across humanities disciplines such as history, philosophy, and psychology, as well as natural sciences like biology, chemistry, and computer science. The interdisciplinary nature of foundational English courses is reflected in their textual content, which covers various topics in history, psychology, science, and technology. Therefore, English teaching needs to transcend the limitations of pure language learning and adopt more scientific methodologies. Interdisciplinary integration and intersection is also evident in high-level courses. For instance, English literature courses can incorporate analytical perspectives from economics (literary economics), geography (literary geography), and environmental studies (ecocriticism). Similarly, translation courses can move beyond basic techniques to include specialized materials from fields such as science, history, and geography, enabling students to practice subject-specific translation and evaluate their work critically. Intercultural communication courses often intersect with disciplines like management, sociology, and psychology, enriching students' understanding and application of theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts. Strengthening general education courses in universities may facilitate students' comprehension of multiple disciplines, laying a solid foundation for interdisciplinary and cross-cultural studies in advanced coursework. To better cultivate interdisciplinary English talents, it is advisable to adopt the textbooks designed with an interdisciplinary perspective.

Teachers can integrate interdisciplinary resources into English teaching, such as case studies, specialized knowledge, and professional skills, to enrich course content and bridge different fields. Teachers from various courses can collaborate across disciplines, learn from one another, and jointly design teaching materials and course structures, thus breaking down disciplinary barriers, and promoting interdisciplinary curriculum integration. Students can apply knowledge and skills acquired from multiple disciplines in practical contexts when instructors organize interdisciplinary projects and exchange activities, such as cross-disciplinary workshops, academic seminars, and cultural exchange events. Additionally, students should be encouraged to participate in interdisciplinary research projects, for example, studies combining linguistics and sociology, economics and literature, or translation studies and communication. Through project-based learning and collaborative research, students can effectively engage with and integrate knowledge across disciplines, enhancing their comprehensive abilities and innovative thinking.

## Utilizing Big Data and New Technologies to Develop Students' Language Proficiency and Autonomous Learning

With the continuous advancement of new technologies, talent cultivation within the framework of the New Liberal Arts increasingly relies on diverse and innovative teaching methods. The integration of technology into English teaching can provide students with immersive and interactive learning experiences. Instructors should take advantage of the benefits of both online and offline learning to stimulate their interest, guiding them in independent inquiry, and constructing a teaching model that embodies digitalization, intelligence, personalization, and diversification. The teaching model turns from a traditional "teacher-student" binary structure to a "teacher-

machine-student" ternary structure. Teachers can effectively integrate online and offline content for courses and activities, designing open-ended questions and inquiry-based learning tasks to encourage students to engage in independent or collaborative exploration before, during, or after class. These tasks may take various forms, such as research investigations, case analyses, and project development, prompting students to explore solutions and seek answers through literature review, group discussions, and collaborative problem-solving.

Collaborative learning is an essential component of blended teaching, fostering students' interaction and cooperation while creating a complementary learning effect. Teachers can organize learning communities based on students' interests and proficiency levels, enabling them to collaboratively complete inquiry-based tasks. Through cooperative exchanges, students can deepen their understanding and enhance their skills. During students' independent inquiry process, teachers should provide timely feedback and guidance to help them identify problems and overcome difficulties. Regular discussions, assessments, and reflections can be used to guide students in summarizing their experiences, raising questions, and continuously adjusting and improving their learning strategies. Big data can track students' learning progress and performance, generating detailed reports to assess their learning behaviors and academic achievements. Using big-data analysis, teachers can promptly identify issues and intervene when necessary. Encouraging students to take initiative and think creatively can enhance their ability for independent learning, innovation, and effective communication. By setting up self-directed learning and research tasks, inspiring students to generate new ideas and solutions, and providing appropriate guidance and support, teachers can effectively stimulate students' motivation and interest in inquiry-based learning.

Teachers should guide students in utilizing a wide range of online learning resources and tools, such as e-books, journal articles, web-based materials. Given the vast amount of information in the era of big data, optimizing and selectively using online resources is crucial in English teaching to avoid superficial and formulaic information. Teachers should assist students in developing learning strategies, engaging in independent study and inquiry, and instructing them on how to effectively utilize various resources and tools, fostering their ability to acquire and analyze information. The application of new technologies in English teaching can be selectively expanded, incorporating tools such as test banks, AI-powered essay grading systems, translation software, ChatGPT, chatbots, and other AI-driven learning tools for English acquisition. By adopting big data and modern teaching methodologies, educators can optimize teaching content and learning approaches, enhance the quality of interactive instruction, dynamically assess learning progress, and cultivate students' critical thinking skills, ultimately enabling them to take charge of their own learning.

## Aligning With Societal Needs: Integrating Theoretical Learning With Practical Teaching

Under the background of New Liberal Arts, English talents should meet the needs of society and enterprises, develop a deep understanding of society, and contribute to its development. English majors should develop an understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives, values, and customs across different cultural backgrounds, allowing them to communicate, collaborate effectively, and foster cultural exchange in various contexts. The integration of theory and practice is essential for creating an engaging and dynamic learning experience. By implementing practical teaching methods, students can apply their theoretical knowledge to real-world contexts, thereby enhancing their sense of social participation.

Practical teaching can take various forms, including on-campus practice courses, simulated practice in designated settings, student-led research projects, and internships at enterprises or designated practice bases. The

progression from campus-based practice to off-campus application ensures a gradual transition into real-world experiences. Students' practical skills can be cultivated through the activities such as research projects, English teaching, overseas internships, and international exchange programs. Using English in real-world communication enables students to develop both their language proficiency and practical skills. Simulated situational dialogues and interactive role-playing exercises can help students enhance their communication skills, and problem-solving abilities. The use of VR technology can immerse students in virtual English-speaking environments, allowing them to engage in situational conversations and cultural experiences. Designing hands-on tasks, organizing competitions, and hosting interactive activities—such as producing English videos, performing English plays, participating in recitation contests, engaging in simulated international forums or simulated English tour guide sessions—can help students apply their knowledge in practice, fostering creativity and practical skills.

Organizing various forms of university-enterprise exchange activities, such as enterprise forums, job fairs, and company visits, provides students with opportunities to engage with professionals and bridge the gap between academia and industry. These activities create a platform for communication and collaboration between students and enterprises, promoting resource sharing and mutual exchange. Students should also be given opportunities to conduct field studies and participate in practical activities, such as visiting enterprises and foreign-related institutions, and conducting research or investigations. Encouraging students to take part in social practice activities—such as cultural dissemination projects and volunteer services—helps cultivate teamwork, social responsibility, and a strong sense of community involvement.

In the context of globalization, college English talents should develop a strong sense of social responsibility and a broad international perspective. They should be aware of global social issues, stay informed about international developments, and actively participate in social practices and public welfare activities, making full use of their professional expertise to contribute to social development and human progress. Teachers or academic advisors can assist students in formulating academic and career plans, guiding them to recognize their social responsibilities and encouraging them to apply their English expertise in social practice to make meaningful contributions. To further motivate students to engage in social practice and public service activities, universities can establish scholarships or honorary titles to recognize those who excel in social responsibility.

Developing students' global vision enables them to analyze and understand the world from a global perspective, fostering their active involvement in international exchanges and cooperation. To facilitate knowledge sharing and academic advancement, it is recommended to collaborate with foreign universities to offer joint courses or research projects, encouraging students to participate in international internships, practical projects, or volunteer programs which helps them gain firsthand experience of different countries' social, cultural, and economic realities, enhancing their cross-cultural communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. Students should also be encouraged to attend international conferences, academic exchange programs, and cultural festivals to engage with foreign experts, business professionals, and international students. These interactions can promote cross-cultural understanding and help to cultivate high-quality talents with comprehensive competence, social responsibility, and a global perspective.

## Conclusion

To cultivate core competencies for college English talents under the framework of New Liberal Arts, educators should foster students' cultural literacy and confidence, strengthen their interdisciplinary skills through knowledge integration and cross-disciplinary learning, and leverage big data and emerging technologies to

enhance language proficiency and autonomous learning abilities. Moreover, education should be aligned with societal demands by integrating theoretical learning with practical application, thereby improving students' competitiveness in the job market and supporting their holistic personal and professional development. Ultimately, these efforts will contribute to the cultivation of well-rounded talents capable of cross-cultural communication, innovative thinking, and effective engagement with the complexities of a globalized world.

## References

Guo, J., & Ma, J. (2023). The value, goals, and approaches of integrating outstanding traditional Chinese culture into higher foreign language education. *Foreign Language Teaching, 44*(4), 63-68.

Wang, Z. (2018). From simple integration to interdisciplinary foreign language talent cultivation—On the training of English majors in the new era. *Shandong Foreign Language Teaching, 39*(3), 61-69.