

# **A Study and Its Revelation of the Education for International Understanding in the World- famous Universities**

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**Keywords:** Globalization, World-famous Universities, Education for International Understanding

**Abstract:** In the era of globalization, education for international understanding plays an important role in the internationalization of higher education and cultivating international talents. In the process of deepening the reform of their education, world-famous universities aim to cultivate students' international consciousness and their ability of international communication and cooperation since 1980s. They make new guidelines and policies, adjust the relevant system and carry out international education. Colleges and universities in China should learn from world-famous universities and pay attention to the goal of talent cultivation, students' quality of international understanding, and diversified courses of education for international understanding in order to build international universities and talents.

## **1. Introduction**

With the strengthening of globalization, the internationalization of higher education has become an inexorable trend since the 1980s. Global interdependence in economics, science, culture and politics is deepening. The degree of interdependence among people and the degree of interdependence between nations are getting higher and higher. The development and changes of this era require people to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation with an open vision, an equal attitude and an inclusive mind to promote cooperation and exchanges among countries in the world. The development of the globalization of human activities will inevitably require the development of Education for International Understanding. At present, China has entered into extensive and in-depth cultural contact with the world. However, China's Education for International Understanding, both in theory and in practice, is still at the stage of exploration and trial. Therefore, in order to cultivate more powerful global-oriented Chinese citizens in the 21st century, we must vigorously develop Education for International Understanding. This article, from the perspective of globalization, learn from international famous universities to carry out related practice of Education for International Understanding, try to explore the ways and means of Education for International Understanding in the universities of our country, expect to provide some enlightenment for cultivating international talents with the spirit of Education for International Understanding under the current education system in our country.

## **2. The Development Process of Education for International Understanding**

So far, Education for International Understanding has been proposed for more than 60 years. In retrospect, Education for International Understanding has experienced three stages of development:

The proposal stage in the 1940s: Education for International Understanding, as a major theme of international education, was established after the Second World War, and was first advocated by UNESCO with the active response of governments. In 1945, UNESCO's constitution stipulated that education should promote mutual understanding among different cultures and ethnicities and promote peace through international cooperation in the area of education. Countries should take action to make their members understand the cultures of other countries or nations through education, and put their own cultures in the context of the world culture.

The exploration stage from the 1950s to the 1970s: in 1950, the members of the 13th International Public Education Conference held that the international communication between teachers and educators was the most practical and effective way to deepen the understanding between people of different nationalities and cultures and to improve education standards. In 1953, UNESCO hosted and implemented the “joint school project”, which clearly proposed the development of Education for International Understanding in the world. In 1962, UNESCO issued a report entitled “ways to inform young people about peace, mutual respect and understanding”, which detailed the principles, objectives and implementation of education in Education for International Understanding. In 1972, the International Education Development Committee of UNESCO wrote “survival of society-- today and tomorrow of education world”. This report regards Education for International Understanding as an important content of education in the future, and points out that the mission of education is to help people find common humanity among different peoples. In 1974, the 18th Standing Council of UNESCO issued “the education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education proposal for human rights and fundamental freedoms”, marking Education for International Understanding entering into a new phase of history[1].

The development stage since 1980s: in 1981, the UNESCO committee prepared the guidelines for Education for International Understanding, defined the goal of Education for International Understanding clearly, and made countries have a clearer understanding of Education for International Understanding. In 1994, the 44th International Education Conference established the connotation of Education for International Understanding and its corresponding culture of peace in the new era, providing a guide for countries to conduct Education for International Understanding in the new century.

The international society in the new century has had an important impact on education in China. In order to adapt to the trend of increasingly frequent contacts and exchanges among countries in the future, China also attaches great importance to strengthening Education for International Understanding. In January 2000, an academic conference was held in Japan for Education for International Understanding in the Asia-pacific region, and China began to enter the field of Education for International Understanding. In July 2010, National Education Plan issued by China clearly pointed out that “to strengthen Education for International Understanding, promote intercultural communication and enhance students’ perceiving and understanding of different countries and cultures”. Developing Education for International Understanding has become an important strategy for Chinese universities to promote internationalization of higher education.

With the advent of the era of globalization, Education for International Understanding is more and more concerned by higher education in all countries[2]. Countries such as the United States, Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Denmark, the Netherlands have promoted Education for International Understanding. The education field in all countries pays close attention to international peace, ecological environment, education and development, multicultural coexistence, international exchanges and cooperation and other international issues. It infiltrates the global concept into the curriculum field and various activities, and establishes the open and international atmosphere in schools, so that students are influenced by the global concept and consciousness.

### **3. A Practical Study on the Education for International Understanding in the World-Famous Universities-Based on the Case Study of Harvard University**

Since the 20th century, the world famous universities represented by the United States have explored their own path in developing Education for International Understanding and made remarkable achievements. It has played an important role in developing its politics, economy, culture, science and technology.

In 2002, Harvard President Lawrence Summers pointed out in his speech at Peking University that with the rising tide of globalization, the university has become more and more important in the international arena, and Harvard University should strengthen cooperation with other universities,

so as to cultivate future leaders with international vision.

In the international era of education, college students' quality should include: 1) international vision and overall understanding of the open world; 2) good international communication skills; 3) the rich experience of multi-culture; 4) knowledge and expertise, etc.<sup>[13]</sup>. The curriculum system of general education of Harvard University lets students understand various international and domestic changes, such as a variety of cultural, political, economic and social institutions, such as the progress of science and technology, and have in-depth understanding on the changing international situation, so as to motivate students to become responsible social citizens[3].

Peabody Museum of Harvard University is an important platform for Education for International Understanding. Its mission is to explore and promote ancient and modern culture, historical allusions, spiritual values, the creation of wisdom and the strengthening of the international character of Harvard University for all races and nations around the world. Through cooperation with scholars and organizations from all over the world, the museum has jointly spread various world civilizations and enhanced the awareness and ability of the Harvard in international understanding.

#### **4. The Approaches and Methods for Chinese Universities to Develop Education for International Understanding**

At present, there is still a big gap between Chinese universities and the requirements of Education for International Understanding in terms of talent cultivation, student quality, curriculum system, teacher quality, international exchange activities and campus culture. Therefore, in view of the experience of the world's top universities in developing Education for International Understanding, Chinese universities should develop Education for International Understanding through the following ways.

##### **4.1 Define the goal of international talent training.**

In the era of globalization, Chinese universities should devote themselves to the cultivation of international talents who participate in the competition of the world economy and are suitable for the development of economic globalization. In order to become a world famous university, Chinese university must learn from the experience of the world famous universities, adjust the target of talent cultivation, cultivate talents with international awareness, international understanding ability and international competitiveness, and finally improve the quality of talent cultivation.

In order to cultivate internationally competitive talents, on the one hand, students should be trained to learn the knowledge of Education for International Understanding, understand world culture and form international ideas. On the other hand, students should be trained to have the attitude and ability of international understanding, respect themselves, respect others, understand foreign culture, and actively communicate and cooperate with foreign countries.

##### **4.2 Improve students' quality in international understanding.**

In the process of teaching, teachers should try their best to infiltrate the concept of Education for International Understanding, explore the content of international understanding, insist on educating people, respect students' subjective status, and cultivate students' critical thinking. The course content should focus on the unity between each subject, strengthen the connection with the society, make preparation for students to participate in international competition and cooperation in the future, and train students to become international talents who can adapt to the development in the era of globalization.

In addition, the school can set up special scholarships to encourage students to give full play to their potential, contribute their talents and realize their value, support students to participate in various domestic and international science and technology innovation projects and competitions, and cultivate a group of high-quality talents with international competitiveness.

Universities also need to expand their thinking and open up their schools so that students can go out of the classroom and out of the country. Let students experience, understand and respect

foreign cultures in person, and promote students' self-construction and internalization of values of international understanding.

### **4.3 Offer diverse courses on Education for International Understanding.**

Through offering courses on Education for International Understanding, the educatees are made to fully recognize the close relationship between individuals and the international community, form the consciousness of competition and cooperation of participation in international affairs and have certain professional knowledge level and considerable operational capability, which is very important for the country to set a good image for in the international arena and establish the competitive position[4].

Special courses on Education for International Understanding should be offered to help students grasp the knowledge of international understanding in depth, so as to improve their ability of international understanding.

Lectures on Education for International Understanding should be offered. The selection of content should reflect the theme of the times, the hot spots and difficult problems in the development of the international society, so as to improve students' critical ability and enrich their international vision[5].

Multilingual courses should be offered. Learning multilingual courses is regarded as an effective way for students to understand foreign cultures and lifestyles, deepen students' comprehensive understanding of foreign cultures, improve students' ability to obtain international information, and promote their integration into the international community [6].

## **5. Conclusion**

To sum up, the higher education in our country needs a comprehensive understanding and learning from the experience of the world famous universities in Education for International Understanding, have a clear concept of Education for International Understanding, establish the content of Education for International Understanding, continuously explore ways and forms of Education for International Understanding suitable for universities in our country, promote teachers' literacy of Education for International Understanding, adjust the management system for modern universities that is matched with Education for International Understanding, thus improve the international status, influence and competitiveness of Chinese education, cultivate international talents with international consciousness who can participate in international affairs and international competition, calmly cope with the international challenges.

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