

A Study on the Impact of Model United Nations Activities on Improving Student's Comprehensive Quality of Military Academy

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Abstract—In recent years, the rapid development of Model United Nations activities in military and civil academies in China has not only enriched the extracurricular activity of foreign language teaching, but also provided a good platform for improving student's comprehensive quality. On the basis of the practice of Model United Nations in PLA Rocket Force University of Engineering, this paper analyzes the impact of Model United Nations on improving student's comprehensive quality and considers how to improve students' comprehensive quality in the future teaching and extracurricular activity.

Keywords—comprehensive quality, Model United Nations activities, military academy, cadets

I. INTRODUCTION

Model United Nations, Model UN for short, is a simulation academic activity of the United Nations and relevant international institutions. It originated from the Simulation International Alliance Conference held by Harvard University and other universities in the United States in 1923, and then evolved into a simulation activity of United Nations. Model UN is to simulate the function of the United Nations and relevant international agencies, and delegates should follow the UN procedure and participate in meetings on international hot issues, and try to provide solution of international issues through discussion, debate and consultation. Round table meeting, social dinner and various intercollegiate exchanges will also be held during the Model UN activities.

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In recent years, the Model United Nations activity has become popular all over the world, and has developed into an international activity that attracts the participates and elite from universities all of the world.

At the end of the twentieth century, the first Model United Nations conference in China was held in Beijing Diplomatic College, which was delayed by nearly 50 years compared with the developed countries represented by the United States [1]. However, since the introduction of Model United Nations in China, it has become very popular and developed rapidly in universities and middle schools all over the country. Military academies are also actively participating in and holding Model United Nations conference.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF IMPROVING COMPREHENSIVE QUALITY OF MILITARY CADETS

Comprehensive quality plays an important role in the future career development of cadets.

With the continuous advance of military system reform, the mission and teaching mode of military academies are undergoing great changes. The aim of the reform is to train officers of a new era who have comprehensive quality with an international vision and can play an important role in winning the future modern wars. Thus, it can be seen that improving the comprehensive quality and international vision of cadets plays a vital role in the future development of cadets and advance of PLA. At the same time, cadets will become basic level commanding officers after graduation and future leaders of the army in the future, so improving the cadets' comprehensive quality will also have a positive impact on internationalization of the PLA.

However, due to the strict daily management system and relatively closed environment of military academies, some unfavorable factors have been brought to improve the comprehensive quality. Therefore, it is urgent to expand the platform and channel of external exchange and learning to provide a good foundation for the growth and development of cadets.

Model United Nations activities meet the demand of cadets to enlarge the external exchange and communication. Participating in Model United Nations activities, cadets can not only have a deeper understanding of operation mechanism of the UN and relevant international organizations and international issues, but also help promote English application ability and the ability of cross-cultural communication [2]. Therefore, participating in Model United Nations activities will have a positive effect on improving the comprehensive quality and international vision of cadets.

III. THE PRACTICE OF MODEL UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES OF ROCKET FORCE UNIVERSITY OF ENGINEERING

In 2010, the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Department of Rocket Force University of Engineering introduced the Model United Nations activities into the postgraduate education for the first time, and the participants responded warmly. Afterwards, relying on the school's Model United Nations Club, the Model United Nations activities were extended to undergraduate students, and the Model United Nations Club tries to do the relevant training activities and hold model meetings, which was of great significance in promoting the reform of foreign language teaching and improving the comprehensive quality of students. With the joint efforts of the tutors of Foreign Language Teaching and Research Department of the university and the backbone of the club, the Model United Nations activities of Rocket Force University of Engineering have developed rapidly, including the following stages:

In the first stage, Model United Nations was introduced in Rocket Force University of Engineering and the backbone of outstanding cadets were selected and trained. The Model United Nations club and counselors selected the cadets with a good command of English language and interest in Model United Nations. Among the cadets, those who had the experience of Model United Nations in junior and senior high schools were preferred to be selected as members of the club. The main training content was the basic knowledge of the Model United Nations, conference rules, English speech and written skills. At the same time, Model United Nations conference was regularly held in Rocket Force University of Engineering, which could not only enrich the students' extracurricular activities, but also help to improve their comprehensive quality.

In the second stage, participating in the Model United Nations conference held by military and civilian universities and training our cadets were the major task.

The club actively trained and exercised outstanding personnel of the Model United Nations, and actively participated in various Model United Nations held by military and civilian universities, including the Model United Nations conference held by Xi'an Foreign Studies University, Northwest Polytechnic University, Air Force Medical University, Naval Engineering University and National Defense Science and Technology University. In the fierce competitions, the cadets have achieved good results. In 2015, the cadets participated in the Model United Nations Conference of Military Academies organized by the PLA Information Engineering University, and won awards such as Best Delegation, Best Delegate and Outstanding President, and participated in the China Model United Nations Conference and won the Best Delegate Award.

In the third stage, Model United Nations conference of the school-level and Xi'an Military and Civil Academies was held in our university, which were of great significance to improve the comprehensive quality of students and the training of school talents. While actively participating in the Model United Nations conference held by military and civilian academies, our students also actively organized the Model United Nations conference. In 2014, Rocket Force University of Engineering held the Model United Nations conference of military and civilian academies of Xi'an district and strived to hold the Model United Nations conference regularly. The Model United Nations conference was a sound platform for the cadets, and by participating and holding the Model United Nations conference, the cadets not only improved their foreign language communicative competence, English comprehensive application ability, but also enhanced organizational ability and broadened international perspective.

In the fourth stage, our school will continue to actively participate in the Model United Nations conference of military and civilian academies in the future and strive to hold Model United Nations conference of Xi'an district and actively participate in China Model United Nations conference. We will strengthen the training of the cadets by making the experienced cadets help the freshman establish a reward mechanism and spare no efforts to provide a broader platform for improving the comprehensive quality of students and expanding their international horizons.

IV. POSITIVE IMPACT OF MODEL UN ACTIVITIES ON IMPROVING STUDENT'S COMPREHENSIVE QUALITY OF MILITARY ACADEMY

A. Model United Nations activities help the cadets have a better understanding of operation mechanism of UN, and cultivate international perspective

In order to meet the needs of the new military reform and seek the strategic initiative and advantages in the future, the armed forces of the major developed countries in the world attach great importance to training the leadership and management qualities of military personnel. They

regard training cadets to become future leaders or elites of the army as the mission of military education. First of all, we should promote cadets' comprehensive quality with international and strategic vision.

Based on the current international situation, the Model United Nations activities are helpful to broaden the international horizon of cadets. Participants must consult a large number of relevant materials of the General Assembly, familiarize themselves with the background information of the rules of United Nations conferences and international hot spots and the interests and concerns of other countries, and prepare relevant textual materials for the speeches and consultations of the General Assembly. [3] With global vision and international concept, cadets are able to keep pace with the times and the world's development trends, and successfully solve challenging problem in their future career development. [4] Meanwhile, the Model United Nations activities can enhance cadets' sense of mission and responsibility and lay a good foundation for improving student's comprehensive quality.

B. Model United Nations activities can help students have a better understanding of cultural backgrounds of different countries, and cultivate their multicultural perspective

In the course of the conference, participants need to explore the political, economic, diplomatic, cultural and historical traditions of different countries in depth. In order to gain recognition from other participants, the cadets need to prepare relevant materials and play a good role as diplomats. Through mutual consultation, debate and cooperation, participants will have a deeper understanding of the human history, religious background and customs of other countries, and gradually enhance their multi-cultural vision and establish a multi-cultural perspective. Under the background of increasingly complex international situation and frequent international exchanges, the cadets should be familiar with the historical and cultural backgrounds of various countries and cultivate multi-cultural perspective.

C. Model United Nations activities can help to provide a solid foundation for cadets' future development

Compared with the other extracurricular activities such as speech and debate, Model United Nations activities have various forms and require English application ability and related professional knowledge. English is the official language in most of the Model United Nations activities in China. The participants need to use English to complete many activities such as material preparation, opinion presentation, debate and consultation, therefore, cadets' international vision can be broadened more effectively, and their communicative competence and English writing ability can be trained. [5] So it is an ideal extracurricular activity.

V. REFLECTION ON MODEL UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES

This paper discusses the positive effect of Model United Nations activities on the improving of cadets'

comprehensive quality and abilities. In order to fully understand the practical significance of Model United Nations activities, the students' gains and challenges in Model United Nations activities, this paper analyses what cadets gained and what are the major challenges the cadets facing who often participated in United Nations activities.

A. The benefits for participates in United Nations activities

Form the interview and questionnaire of the cadets of the Model United Nations club who actively participates in United Nations activities, several aspects were mentioned.

Firstly, participating in Model United Nations activities helps to improve their English comprehensive application ability, because they have to use English to communicate with other delegates as English is the official language of the Model United Nations activities, and they have to hand in different kinds of paper in English.

Secondly, participating in Model United Nations activities helps to develop their leadership and cooperation spirit because they have to form allies to gain interests in the international issues and be the leader in the discussion.

Thirdly, participating in Model United Nations activities helps to improve their social skills because Model United Nations activities provide a platform for social activities and they made a lot of friends from different universities.

Fourthly, participating in Model United Nations activities helps to broaden their vision and improving understanding of international issues.

The above analysis indicates that gains from Model United Nations activities are diverse for the cadets. Most of the participants regard the Model United Nations as an activity to improve their English proficiency and a stage to improve their overall quality. Making friends is one of the surprising benefits. Greater social circles and improving social competence are also one of the benefits of Model United Nations activities.

However, it also reflects that many participants pay more attention to the social function of Model United Nations activities, but they do not have enough academic knowledge of Model United Nations activities. Academic nature is the soul and key of Model United Nations activities, but some of the existing Model United Nations activities are not of high academic level, and it is also one of the greatest challenges for the participates.

B. The major challenges of Model United Nations activities for participates

Besides English proficiency, there are two major challenges for the cadets participating in Model United Nations activities.

Firstly, one of the main purposes of participating in Model United Nations activities is improving the cadets' academic level and it is also the greatest challenge. As Model United Nations activities are very popular nowadays in China and some of the Model United Nations activities

are not of high academic level, participating in Model United Nations activities can't really help the cadets improve their academic level, and some of the participants regard Model United Nations activities as social platform to make friends and a bonus for the graduation. Because of lack of professional guidance from qualified experts, some of the cadets don't know exactly how to improve their academic level. At present, the profession knowledge of international relations and UN of high academic level Model United Nations activities has beyond the professional fields of some English teachers who have to give instruction to the cadets. So how to cultivate cadets high academic level of Model United Nations has become one the major problems in the future.

Secondly, International political background knowledge is the biggest obstacle for participants to participate in the Model United Nations activities. Most of the topics of Model United Nations activities are international hotspots and focus issues, involving more international political content, including international security, international trade, environmental protection, population, food, cultural relics' protection, cyber security, human rights, anti-terrorism and many other issues. For those students who seldom pay attention to international issues or have a narrow knowledge area in peacetime, the lack of knowledge reserve is often even worse than English. The lack of international political background knowledge makes them less competent, which is also the weakness of most English teachers. Since most of the participants who are willing to take part in the Model United Nations activities have relatively high comprehensive English proficiency, the English ability in the analysis has not become the biggest difficulty for the participants. But English document writing is still a challenge for many students, because English document writing needs special training to be competent. Besides, data collection is also ranked near the

top in the difficulty list. How to collect data is also a professional skill, and some training is needed. All these will become the key content of improvement of Model United Nations activities in the future.

VI. CONCLUSION

To sum up, the participation of the cadets from military academies in Model United Nations activities has a lot of benefits, and participates also face many difficulties. It can not only improve their English application ability and debate ability, but also cultivate their ability to coordinate, cultivate their cooperation spirit, enhance their political sensitivity, and effectively expand their international horizons. In order to provide a sound platform for cadets to improve their comprehensive quality, there are many challenges should be met in the future. This will be helpful for cadets to improve their comprehensive quality that will also play a significant role in promoting the military combat effectiveness.

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