

College Students' Leadership Cultivation: A Case Study of Yango University in China

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With the continuous economic growth, the social demand for talent has significantly changed. Cultivating leadership among college students has become one of the most critical tasks of Chinese universities. Scholars have increasingly explored and researched in this area. Yango University, located in Fuzhou, the capital of Fujian Province in China, has developed a program for cultivating college student leadership in its CEO College based on the theory of genetic constructivism. Combined with the five forces model of college student leadership, it follows the competency composition and development patterns. Based on this, a three-layer competency cultivation model of disciplinary knowledge, disciplinary thinking, and problem-solving has been constructed. Yango University has developed an innovative model for cultivating college students. It provides a valuable reference for other Chinese colleges and universities to promote the model for cultivating college student leadership.

Keywords: genetic constructivism, college student leadership, cultivation model

INTRODUCTION

The Chinese government holds that education, science and technology, and human resources are the foundational and strategic pillars for building a modern socialist country in all respects. It stresses that China must regard science and technology as its primary productive force, talent as its primary resource, and innovation as its primary driver of growth. China will fully implement the strategy for invigorating China through science and education, the workforce development strategy, and the innovation-driven development strategy. Also, China will open up new areas and arenas in development and steadily foster new growth drivers and strengths (Cui & Shi, 2022). In the research on employers, Sun (2013) found that different employers have different requirements for college students' planning and communication skills in leadership. To cultivate interdisciplinary and innovative talents to meet the needs of society in Western countries, many colleges and universities have been cultivating college student leadership since the 1980s (Zhang and Li, 2019). In China, colleges and universities in recent years have also made it an essential goal of quality education and human resource development to cultivate high-level students with excellent leadership skills (Jiang and Gan, 2021).

At the same time, scholars worldwide have extensively investigated and explored the concept of college student leadership and the mode of its cultivation. Recent studies have examined the leadership development of a specific group of college students and how to foster leadership at a specific time. Chang (2023) was also concerned about people of color in U.S. colleges and universities. He analyzed the facilitating role of leaders of color in promoting social justice and designed leadership development programs for students of color. Focusing on African students in U.S. colleges and universities, Manyibe, Manyibe, and Otiso (2022) suggested that students' pre-college leadership must be captured to foster college student leadership.

Meanwhile, they identified the factors affecting leadership development as family, church, African culture, and high school influences. Korean scholars Kim and Lim (2021) addressed how to cultivate college student leadership in the age of disaster. They proposed counseling education programs on the core competencies and the educational philosophy of Howon University. Thus, it can be seen that countries have explored how to cultivate college student leadership to a high level. In contrast, Chinese colleges and universities have initially researched and cultivated college student leadership. However, up to now, scholars have not yet reached a consensus on the definition of "college student leadership" (Liu & Zhang, 2022). Generally speaking, college student leadership refers to the qualities of individual college students acting as leaders in a specific group, comprising leadership qualities and leadership abilities (Li, 2016). Currently, the research on college student leadership in China is mainly concentrated on the following three aspects:

Firstly, it is the research on the connotation of college student leadership. Shao (2015) advocates that college student leadership is characterized by the ability to know themselves, handle interpersonal relationships, adapt, think creatively, serve and capture policies. Yu, Luo, and Zhang (2015) argue that college student leadership is characterized by charisma, as represented by interpersonal interaction, communication skills, and external temperament. Another critical point is influence, which means college students influence others through their comprehensive qualities to achieve team goals. Liu (2021) points out that college student leadership comprises leadership cognition, leadership behavior, and leadership ability. Specifically, it involves leadership theoretical knowledge and leadership awareness, leadership experience and process, and leadership skills and methods. In addition, Xu, Xiong, and Xiong (2022) conclude that leadership is a typical psychological activity with the expectation of maximizing the impact of communication. In teamwork or interpersonal interactions, individuals expect to demonstrate their confidence, competence, and influence as leaders.

Secondly, it is to study the cultivation of college student leadership in foreign colleges and universities and the inspiration to Chinese colleges and universities. Kong and Lin (2013) introduce the social change model and the leadership challenge model of college student leadership education in the United States. The content of U.S. college student leadership education is represented in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Its cultivation pathway includes curriculum, workshops, mentorship, club practice, social learning, and public service. Shao (2015) investigates the leadership development of colleges and universities in the United States. He reveals that by learning from American colleges and universities, Chinese colleges and universities can develop curricula collaborating with communities and design the curriculum system based on leadership theory and cultivation. Focusing on the leadership education of Yale University, Zhang (2011) summarizes the features of Yale University's model for cultivating college student leadership. It emphasizes cultivating students' social responsibility, encourages students to participate in club activities, and cultivates their global perspectives. Through a comparative analysis between Chinese and American education models, Jiang and Gan (2021) suggest that the education philosophy of Chinese colleges and universities emphasizes dedication and cooperation. However, they put little emphasis on students' personality development, which is not conducive to cultivating student leadership. Therefore, Chinese colleges and universities should learn from foreign education concepts that stress personality development.

Thirdly, it investigates the cultivation mode of college student leadership in Chinese colleges and universities. Yan (2015) suggests that socialist core values education can serve as a guide to reform colleges and universities' curriculum and institutional settings. At the same time, college student leadership can be cultivated, and socialist core values education can be carried out. In a survey of college students, Liu (2021)

concluded that the main factors affecting college student leadership could be categorized into individual subjective and objective factors. Based on this, college students' leadership can be cultivated through professional teacher training, curriculum development, and incorporation of leadership into evaluation. Wang (2022) analyzed the dilemma of college student leadership cultivation in China and advocated the adoption of targeted paths. Specifically, colleges and universities can increase the number of students enrolled and diversify the cultivation modes. Alternatively, they may improve the curriculum and education system and integrate value education into the education system. Wang (2022) indicates collaborative learning is essential for cultivating college student leadership. It can cultivate various competencies such as learning, influence, communication, and cooperation and enhance student involvement in their leadership cultivation. In addition, there is no effective mechanism for assessing the process and effectiveness of leadership development in Chinese colleges and universities. Given this, Liu et al. (2020) proposed a team-based cultivation and evaluation strategy.

In a study of the successful cultivation models in Chinese universities, Yu, Luo, and Zhang (2015) summarized the cultivation model of Jiangxi University of Chinese Medicine as the "dual practice model." It involves building a comprehensive knowledge system and developing a sound philosophy of life. As an educational philosophy and cultivation mode, it makes no social distinctions in education, prioritizes learning, emphasizes motivation, cultivates students' unique skills, promotes practice, and develops creativity. Based on the goal of college student leadership cultivation, Sun, Ma, and Xu (2015) proposed an educational model based on experiential learning theory. Furthermore, they pointed out that experiential learning is crucial in this model. Xie (2022) analyzed and summarized the cultivation model of Qingdao Technical College into two types. One model combines ideological and political education with college student leadership; the other combines professional education with college student leadership. Based on the leadership challenge model, Jiang and Li (2021) summarized the "five-in-one" cultivation model. In other words, they build an integrated cultivation system through a holistic design of classroom teaching, practical teaching, extracurricular activities and disciplinary competitions, network resources, and ideological and political guidance.

Chinese colleges and universities have introduced various models for cultivating college student leadership, and related research has also involved multiple aspects of college student leadership. It summarizes and refines different educational models from the specific practices. However, there is insufficient research on analyzing and constructing educational models from the mechanism of educational theories. Based on this, this paper proposes genetic constructivism as the rationale for the design. The cultivation model of the CEO College of Yango University investigates the leadership cultivation model for modern university students.

THEORIES ON THE CULTIVATION MODEL OF COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Constructivism is one of the classic theories in education research, which has been evolving since the 18th century and has been widely investigated. After introducing constructivism to China, it has also attracted the attention of scholars in China. Constructivism encompasses many elements. Its main point is that "knowledge is not derived from the subject or the object alone, but is constructed in the interaction between the subject and the object (Piaget, Wang, et al., 1985)." The established constructivist learning theory believes learning is constructing knowledge in an authentic context. It is the product of interaction and practice between teachers and students and among students (Chen & Zhang, 1998). However, the established constructivist theories do not specify how learning is generated.

Bai et al. (2020) pointed out that genesis is the premise and foundation of construction, and learners' knowledge construction must be examined with genesis as the logical starting point. Thus, from the perspective of genetic constructivism, the learning process involves knowledge generation and construction. Deep learning refers to the progression of knowledge structure from a low-level to a high-level state due to the generation of the learner's thinking logic. At the same time, their thinking level keeps improving. In teaching practice, teachers should be concerned with how knowledge is connected with students' thinking skills when students' learning is generated. If teachers only emphasize knowledge

teaching but do not guide students to develop understanding and thinking, students will acquire scattered and unrelated expertise. They cannot then apply the knowledge to specific problems in practice.

On the contrary, if teachers do not emphasize knowledge teaching but only cultivate students' thinking ability, they cannot get good results. Students do not receive specific knowledge to support their thinking as the thinking is generated. Thus, teachers should allow students to develop their core literacy and key competencies while learning about the subject (Bai, Shen, and Li, 2022).

Secondly, in teaching practice, establishing the connection between knowledge points is the key to guiding learners' higher-order thinking. Contacts are established between knowledge points within a discipline, knowledge points of different disciplines, and between disciplines and learners' life experiences. Hence, teachers should consider the connections' scope, breadth, and depth in guiding learners to make connections. In this way, they encourage learners to develop their ability to make connections and further reach a state of deep learning (Bai, 2022).

With genetic constructivism as a starting point, Bai (2022) proposed a new educational model. It consists of knowledge, process, and thinking, corresponding to the disciplinary knowledge, problem-solving, and disciplinary thinking layers.

Learners mainly acquire knowledge and concepts in the disciplinary knowledge layer. In the disciplinary thinking layer, they consciously connect new and acquired knowledge. They incorporate new knowledge points into the established knowledge structure and develop a new knowledge structure. In the problem-solving layer, learners think about real-life cases. In this layer, learners progress from learning knowledge to developing thinking skills.

Miao & Huo from the Chinese Academy of Sciences (2006) proposed a five-force model of leadership based on the leadership process. They consider leadership necessary to ensure the smooth progress of leadership and the realization of leadership goals, including foresight, charisma, influence, determination, and control.

Charisma means college students have noble sentiments, firm beliefs, correct values, and broad knowledge. Foresight and influence refer to a profound understanding of the world, the discipline, and the program. Determination and control imply that students can control key points in critical moments, select the right persons, and be responsible for the results. The five forces leadership model provides a good idea for college student leadership cultivation.

Based on genetic constructivism and the five forces, the research team constructed a model for cultivating college student leadership based on five competencies (Table 1).

TABLE 1
THE MODEL FOR CULTIVATING COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERSHIP USING GENETIC CONSTRUCTIVISM AND THE FIVE FORCES MODEL

	Charisma	Foresight	Influence	Determination	Control
Disciplinary knowledge (Curriculum)	Professional Ethics	Market Research and Innovation	Leadership Formation	Financial Management	Management
	Human Resource Management	Entrepreneurship	Organizational Behavior	Operations Management	Corporate Strategy and Risk Management
Disciplinary thinking (Cultivation model)	Learning groups: readings, seminars, salons, students running their university				
Problem-solving (Cultivation model)	Students' practical projects with the companies				

Source: Organized in this study.

THE MODEL FOR CULTIVATING COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERSHIP AT YANGO UNIVERSITY

Based on the theory of genetic constructivism, the abilities required for college student leadership, and the developmental rules, Yango University designed a model for cultivating college student leadership. The model has three layers: disciplinary knowledge, disciplinary thinking, and problem-solving. The three layers follow the learning theory of genetic constructivism. It also adapts to the abilities and needs of contemporary college students and fits the characteristics of college student leadership cultivation. To this end, Yango University has established a secondary college, the CEO College, for practicing the model.

The CEO College is open to students from all secondary colleges. Applicants should have the courage to explore and be innovative, entrepreneurial, and competent in innovation and entrepreneurship. They should be determined and bold in their actions and meet one of the five criteria the CEO College specifies.

Firstly, they must have rich practical experience, receive outstanding results in various entrepreneurial practices, and win awards in marketing competitions and other events. Secondly, they should be experienced in team management and lead their teams to achieve excellent results. Thirdly, they should demonstrate excellent planning skills and be experienced in planning practical projects or large-scale events. Fourthly, they should excel in communication and expression and perform well in various speeches, roadshows, and business negotiations. Fifthly, they should stand out in a particular area of expertise and be recommended by the board of directors, steering committee, or management team.

When CEO College selects students, it does not require them to have served as student leaders. Instead, it selects quick-thinking, passionate, experienced students in a particular field. Bai (2022) suggests that, from the perspective of genetic constructivism, learning is generated based on each learner's total experience. Therefore, learners' experiences, perceptions, or knowledge should be fully considered in education. CEO College's method of selecting students is consistent with the theory of genetic constructivism. The right persons lay a sound foundation for cultivating college student leadership.

Cultivation Strategies at the Disciplinary Knowledge Layer

Students in CEO College have initial experience in competitions and team management but cannot make connections between knowledge and thinking. Hence, CEO College is dedicated to cultivating future leaders with competencies in workplace literacy, project operation management, market research and decision-making, marketing and brand management, and innovation. Based on this, it offers courses in management, applied statistics, human resource management, financial management, operations management, marketing, corporate strategy and risk management, innovation and entrepreneurship, organizational behavior, leadership development, and international trade law.

The courses offered at CEO College are not taught in chapters. Instead, the courses are structured in modules according to the topics. Students are then divided into groups of 5-6 members to learn together and present their results. It allows the student groups to master the theoretical framework of the course over one semester. In addition, students can learn about the connections between knowledge points. The disciplinary knowledge is taught through the above model to enable students to acquire the knowledge and concepts necessary for developing their leadership. Students can gain a disciplinary understanding of college student leadership through the course.

Cultivation Strategies at the Disciplinary Thinking Layer

CEO College has also set up a peer learning system (Figure 1). According to the research, peer-assisted learning is suitable for college students. During the learning process, those who offer assistance can gain authority and trust, while those who are assisted correct their behaviors and learning methods by observing and imitating. The learning method facilitates students' enhancement and progress (Zhao, 2019).

The students establish a stable study group at the first stage of a peer reading club. It aims to cultivate students' reading habits to explore their psychological development and enhance their management skills. Group activities are diversified, not limited to reading clubs. They also include viewing and learning about growth-related documentaries and movies.

Team research, research report writing, market analysis, and other team activities are organized in the second stage. These activities aim to cultivate students' speaking and writing skills, promote writing through reading, and improve their language expressions.

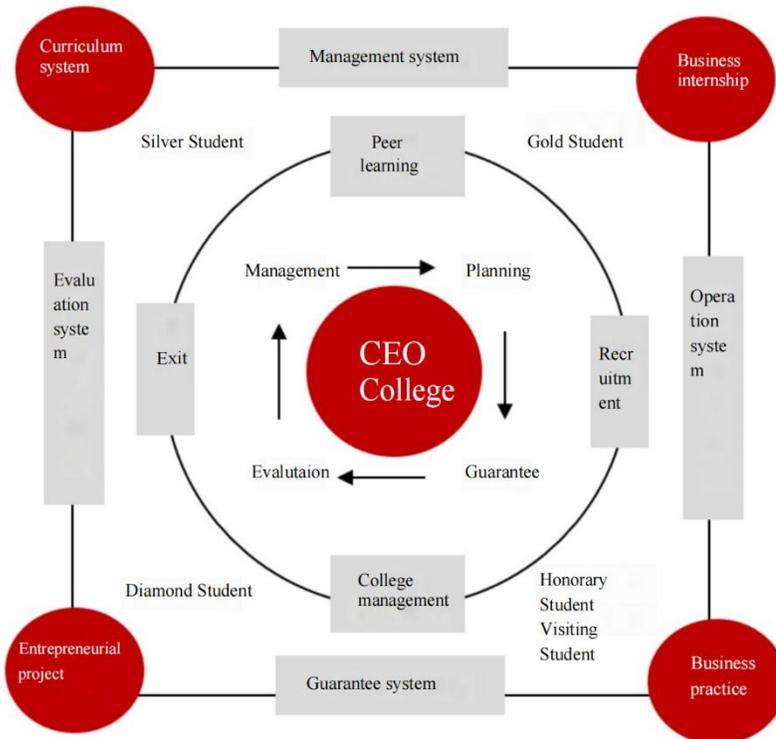
In the third stage, psychology students can organize group development activities to improve their qualities and competencies. Through such peer learning, students observe, emulate, and help each other, thus enhancing the learning ability of the whole group. In addition, CEO College also allows its students to manage the college by themselves (Figure 2). The management team comprises the college's best students and is headed by a dean under the board of directors' leadership. The management team adopts a competition-based recruitment system. The board of directors recommends the members, the steering committee or self-nominated by the students. Management team members are officially appointed for one year after passing the probationary period and are issued a letter of appointment by CEO College.

The CEO College has rotating dean, associate dean, division chairman, and associate division chairperson positions. Furthermore, a rotating dean system is in place. The dean should execute the board of directors' decisions and implement the college's development plan. It should establish the rules and regulations of CEO College, formulate and execute the work plan, and be specifically responsible for the routine management of the College. The associate dean should be responsible for enrollment, publicity, academic affairs, programs, finance, student management, and college-enterprise exchanges. The division chairperson should be accountable for student management, teaching operations, and administration. The associate division chairperson should assist the division chairperson in student management, teaching operations, and administration. College students' disciplinary thinking is fostered through peer learning and student-run college models. While learning from their peers, students relate their new knowledge to their acquired knowledge. In addition, when students participate in the college's administration, the leadership knowledge they have acquired through practice is connected to what they have learned. These methods allow students to master leadership knowledge in the disciplinary thinking layer.

FIGURE 1
CEO COLLEGE'S PEER LEARNING SYSTEM



FIGURE 2
CEO COLLEGE'S STUDENT-RUN COLLEGE MODEL



Cultivation Strategies at the Problem-Solving Layer

CEO College organizes study tours to renowned companies, recommends students participate in training camps for college students at prominent companies, and provides them with internships. Furthermore, it offers practical training in projects aligned with the university's development and social needs, such as projects in the future technology and modern service industries. Projects include, but are not limited to, industrial college projects, university-enterprise cooperation projects, vocational education projects, achievement transformation projects, horizontal research projects, and entrepreneurial projects.

To stimulate students' innovative thinking and awareness, CEO College engages students in innovative research and entrepreneurship training and practice, thus enhancing their innovative research and practical capabilities. The programs are categorized into innovation training, entrepreneurship training, and entrepreneurship practice. Innovation training programs are designed and implemented by student teams under the supervision of on-campus and off-campus mentors. At the same time, students are required to complete the research report and transform the research achievements. Entrepreneurship training programs require students to take up specific positions in the company under the guidance of on-campus and off-campus mentors.

Moreover, students should prepare business plans, conduct feasibility studies, simulate enterprises' operations, and write entrepreneurship reports. For entrepreneurial practice programs, student teams, under the joint guidance of school mentors and business mentors, transform the achievements of the previous innovation training program into potential and innovative products or services to satisfy the market demand. Also, they engage in entrepreneurial practice activities.

In addition, CEO College organizes exchange visits or study tours to overseas universities and renowned universities in China. Students can take quality courses with mutual acceptance of credits. In addition, the College recommends the best students to study in overseas universities for a master's degree.

Students receive campus training programs for innovation and entrepreneurship through the above cultivation models. Moreover, by connecting with companies and starting their own business, students are trained in problem-solving skills to foster their leadership. It is designed for students to think, analyze, and apply the knowledge of college student leadership to practical cases and projects. In this way, the learning of college student leadership is not merely limited to knowledge learning. Also, students enhance their capabilities from knowledge learning to problem-solving.

EFFECTIVENESS OF YANGO UNIVERSITY'S MODEL FOR CULTIVATING COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERSHIP

In the first session of CEO College, 151 students were enrolled in the university's 28 programs. One student was enrolled in the class of 2019, 30 in the class of 2020, 75 in the class of 2021, and 55 in the class of 2022. After the training of students for some time, CEO College has achieved some results in the following three aspects:

First, results were achieved in the disciplinary knowledge layer. About 100 students applied for the first session's Leadership Formation and Management courses. For both courses, teachers teach disciplinary knowledge of leadership in a flexible approach. The Leadership Formation course adopts accurate scenario simulation and experiential teaching designed from the psychology perspective. It stresses students' feelings and active thinking, integrates simulation into the classroom, and drives students to analyze what they have learned and interact. Given this, the students have well received the courses. Thus, CEO College intends to develop this course into a university-level general course to benefit more students.

Then, CEO College introduced the teaching modules of soft skills (speaking, writing, and research) into the curriculum design of university-level general courses (career planning, practical writing, and career guidance). It changes the traditional design of the available course modules based on students' vocational needs. Given its professional hard power, it strengthens the training of students' soft power in the workplace and cultivates talented persons with outstanding soft and hard power.

Second, results were achieved in the disciplinary thinking layer. Students of CEO College have set up three workshops: the Legal Services Workshop, the Advocacy Workshop, and the Psychological Support Workshop. Initiated and guided by teachers, the students establish and manage the workshops and select the members themselves. At the same time, students formulate the regulations of the workshops and plan and manage them on their own. Teachers change their roles from instructors to advisors. The Legal Services Workshop specializes in preventing legal risks in college students' entrepreneurship practices. It caters to students who need legal counseling to start a business during college. Furthermore, it has initiated a learning platform for law, such as writing legal risk guidelines for college students' entrepreneurship and organizing law lectures. Students can practice their legal skills on campus, cultivate management skills, and enhance their leadership.

CEO College has a rotating management trainee system for college-level administration positions. Students are later matched with appropriate positions based on their interests and strengths. Currently, the college-level administration team is working spontaneously on the college's practical projects and drafting the measures for the student management team. It plans the activities, competitions, and training of the college for 2023 and monitors the workshops, management positions, project teams, and study groups in the college. In addition, it interviews members of workshops, management positions, project teams, and study groups within the college. Based on this, it identifies and reviews potential problems to optimize existing initiatives.

Third, results were obtained in the problem-solving layer. CEO College organized 12 research project teams for corporate positions. Students volunteered to go deep into famous enterprises and conduct online and field research, in-depth interviews, data collection, literature analysis, and business analysis. Then, students investigated the current job market's talent needs and competency requirements of leaders in line with their development plans. Based on market research and professional guidance, Shen, a critical student of CEO College, led a team to incubate the JAVA Training Camp and JAVA Advanced Class. It has established a cultivation model combining skills, academic qualifications, and employment to empower

students and meet the urgent demand for high-end talents in the Internet industry. In addition, the team has collaborated with other enterprises to customize training plans for them. Based on this, it improves students' vocational skills and comprehensive quality and delivers high-level talents to enterprises. Meanwhile, the team offers services such as seminars, special training camps, and online professional forums with the support of on-campus platforms and university-enterprise resources. Also, it provides customized training for students to find jobs at top venues with high starting salaries.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Yango University's model for cultivating college students' competencies is based on genetic constructivism and the competence composition of the five forces model of college student leadership. It divides the cultivation of college student leadership into three layers. Also, it embodies the learning philosophy of genetic constructivism and is consistent with the competence requirements of college student leadership cultivation. In particular, it innovatively proposes the practice of "students running their university." So, it addresses the inability of colleges and universities in China to train college students' leadership on proper platforms. It can, therefore, serve as a reference for other universities in China to cultivate students' leadership.

This model applies to leadership cultivation for all college students. Many colleges and universities in China have developed unique models for college student leadership cultivation, such as the "five-in-one" model and the "dual practice model." The "five-in-one" model builds a holistic cultivation model through five classroom and practical teaching aspects. The "dual practice model" nurtures students by creating a comprehensive knowledge system and developing rational life philosophies. These models are the results of long-term practice, summarization, and research of colleges and universities based on their specific situations. The model for cultivating college student leadership from the perspective of genetic constructivism is innovatively developed by Yango University in its long-term teaching and practice. However, some problems have arisen in its implementation. Some students cannot sustain their motivation for a long time. Some have reduced their study time due to excessive participation in practical activities. Some may be too eager for quick success and instant benefits. Yango University is constantly exploring solutions to these problems. It helps students to develop proper values in various ways. In addition, it has introduced a mentoring group system. Teachers can become mentors and friends to accompany students in their growth. Finally, the research team concludes that other applied universities in China can still adopt Yango University's model for cultivating college student leadership. Finally, this model is expected to provide some references for exploring and practicing leadership cultivation among college students in China.

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