

# **Exploration on the Improvement of International Ability of College Students from Poor Families**

## ***--Take a university in Jiangsu Province as an example***

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### **Abstract**

College students from poor families are a special group. The assistance to them is not only the requirement of the fundamental task of “strengthening moral education and cultivating people” of colleges and universities, but also the practical need of the work pattern of “three-wide education”, and also an important manifestation of educational equity in China. International ability is one of the core competencies of contemporary talents, and it is of great significance to the talent strategy of our country for improving the training quality and comprehensive ability of talents. This paper analyzes the difficulties of the improvement of the international ability of college students from poor families, explores the effective channels to improve the international ability of college students from poor families, and provides the practical and feasible support measures to help them become successful talents.

**Keywords:** Colleges and universities; Students from poor families; International ability; Improvement

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

On February 25, 2021, General Secretary Xi Jinping solemnly declared that China has achieved a comprehensive victory in the fight against poverty and completed the

difficult task of eliminating absolute poverty at the National Summary and Commendation Conference of Poverty Alleviation <sup>[1]</sup>. The assistance to college students from poor families is one of the important means to consolidate the results of poverty alleviation, and the important guarantee of the fundamental task of “strengthening moral education and cultivating people” of colleges and universities. Talent competition is the most important competition in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and even the future. Talents with international ability are favored by all parties; however, limited by objective conditions, some excellent students from poor families have insufficient international ability, which is the “stumbling block” for their further development. The Proposal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Formulating the Fourteenth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Term Goals for the Year 2035 adopted by the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19<sup>th</sup> CPC Central Committee on October 29, 2020 specified that the environment for China's development is facing profound and complex changes, the international development environment is grim, economic globalization encounter adverse current, and the world enters a period of turbulence and change <sup>[2]</sup>. These complex and unstable international situations have brought about both risks and challenges as well as development opportunities, with an unprecedented demand for international talents. Under the background of the in-depth promotion of “the Belt and Road”, China is in urgent need of more talents with international ability to seize talents and the “highland” of science and technology, and colleges and universities play an extremely important role in this process <sup>[3]</sup>.

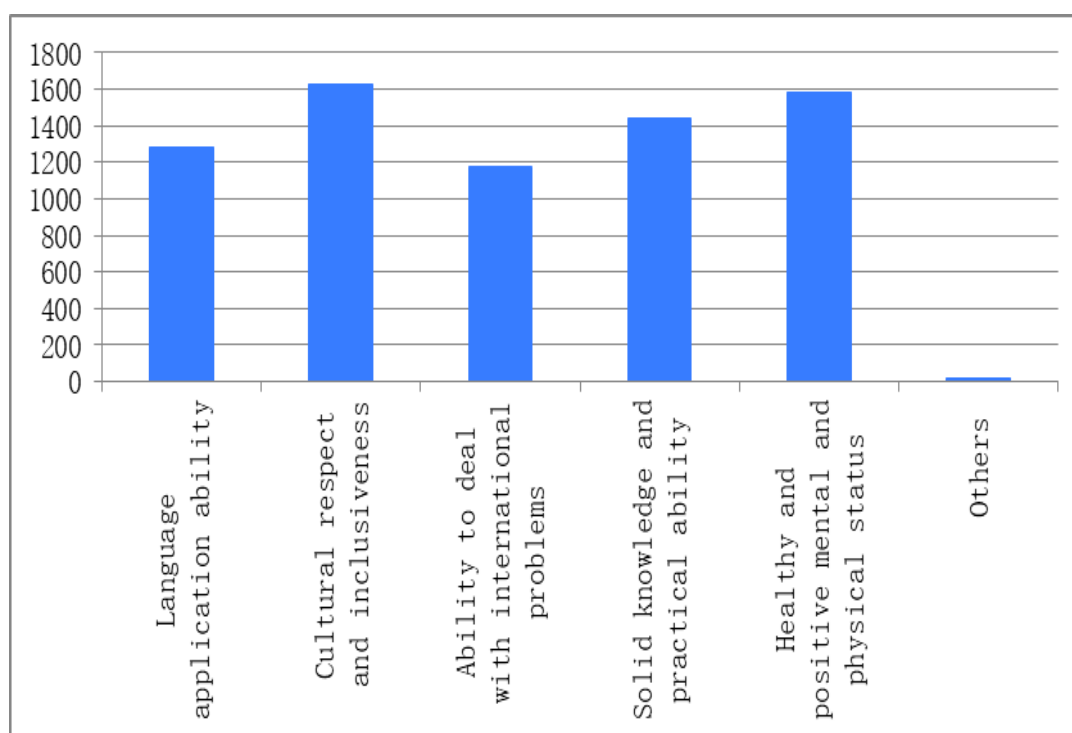
International ability of college students is the core competence of current high-end talents, and the comprehensive manifestation of professional knowledge, vision and insights, competence and literacy. Stephens believes that cross-culture knowledge, creative thinking, written communication ability and appropriate flexibility are basic abilities of international talents <sup>[4]</sup>. From the international point of view, the main components of international ability are broad international vision, excellent innovative ability, professional international knowledge, rich international practice reserve, strong communication ability and healthy physical and psychological qualities <sup>[5]</sup>. From the perspective of knowledge, competence and literacy, knowledge is composed of professional knowledge, international knowledge and language knowledge, competence includes cross-culture ability, innovative ability and lifelong learning ability, and literacy is composed of humanistic literacy, scientific literacy and information literacy <sup>[6]</sup>.

There is no uniform definition of the connotation of international ability in the academic circle; however, the following contents are generally included: a certain foreign language ability, can communicate in language or in writing without barriers; solid professional knowledge, can carry out international cooperation and innovation;

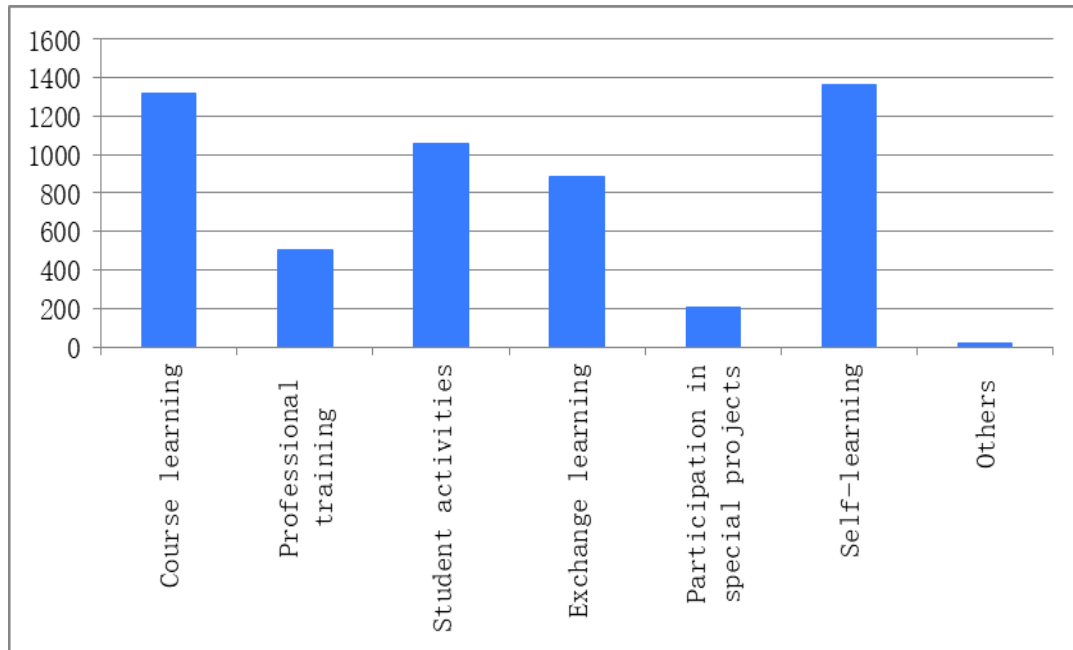
rich scientific and humanistic literacy, familiar with international rules and can participate in international activities in different forms; a certain international vision and way of thinking, can communicate across cultures, absorb, tolerate and understand cultural differences.

## II. INVESTIGATION ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF INTERNATIONAL ABILITY OF COLLEGE STUDENTS FROM POOR FAMILIES

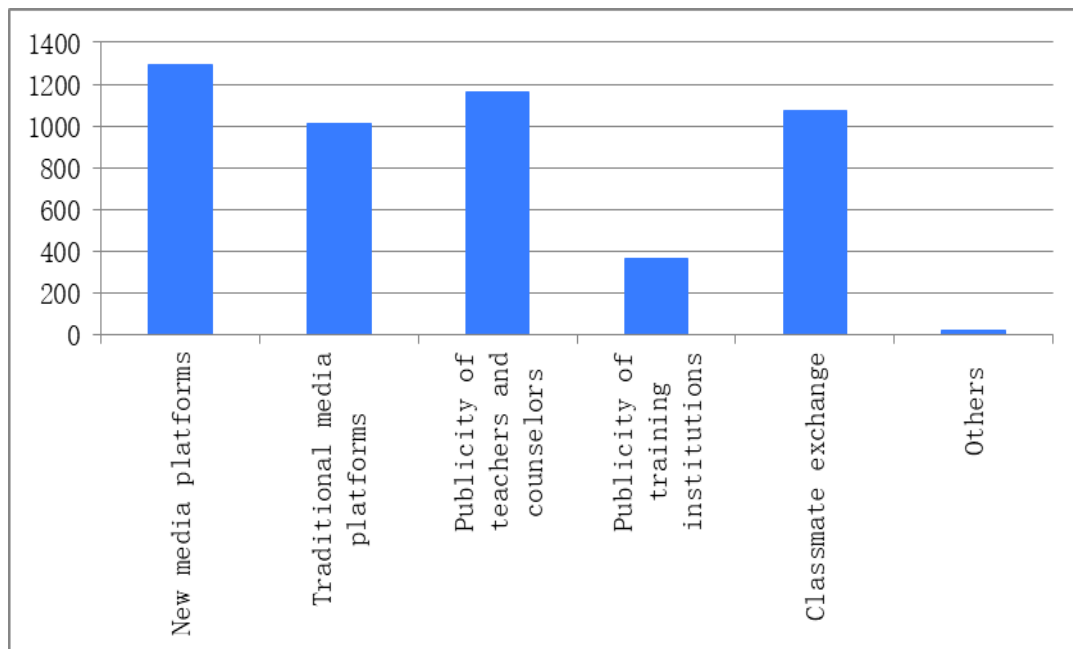
This paper takes a university in Jiangsu as the research object and sends electronic questionnaires to the students from poor families of the whole university by random sampling with a total of 1,783 students. In terms of the gender, there are 887 boys, accounting for 49.75%, and 896 girls, accounting for 50.25%. In terms of the grade, there are 706 first-year undergraduate students who participated in the research, accounting 39.59%, 496 students in the second year, accounting for 27.82%, 356 students in the junior year, accounting for 19.97%, 186 students in the senior year (including the fifth year of undergraduate with some majors), accounting for 10.43%, and 39 postgraduates (including Master and PhD), accounting for 2.19%. After analyzing the questionnaire content, the results are shown in Figure 1 to Figure 5.



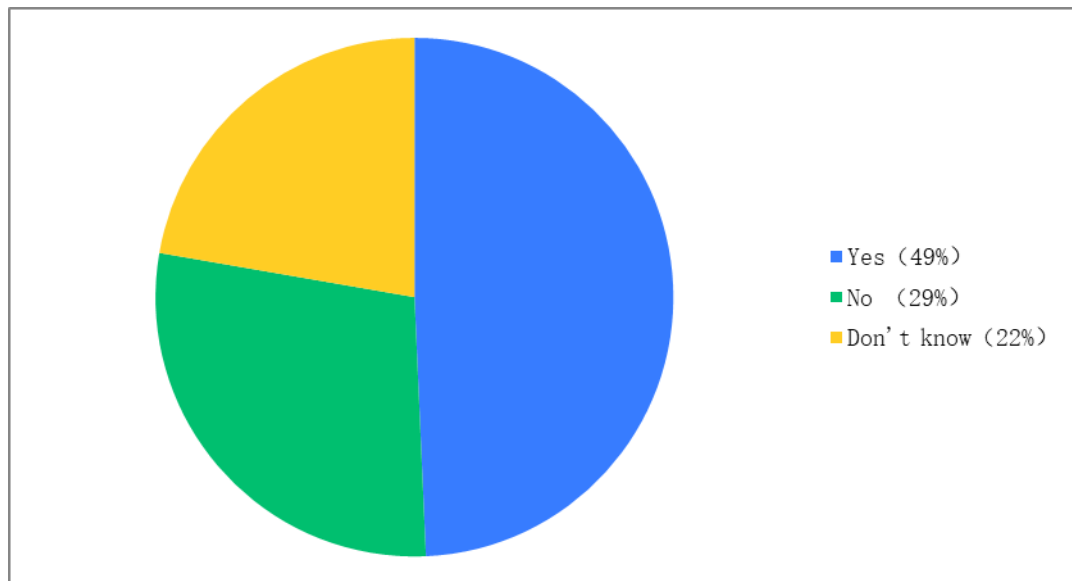
**Figure 1** Main Contents of International Ability of College Students



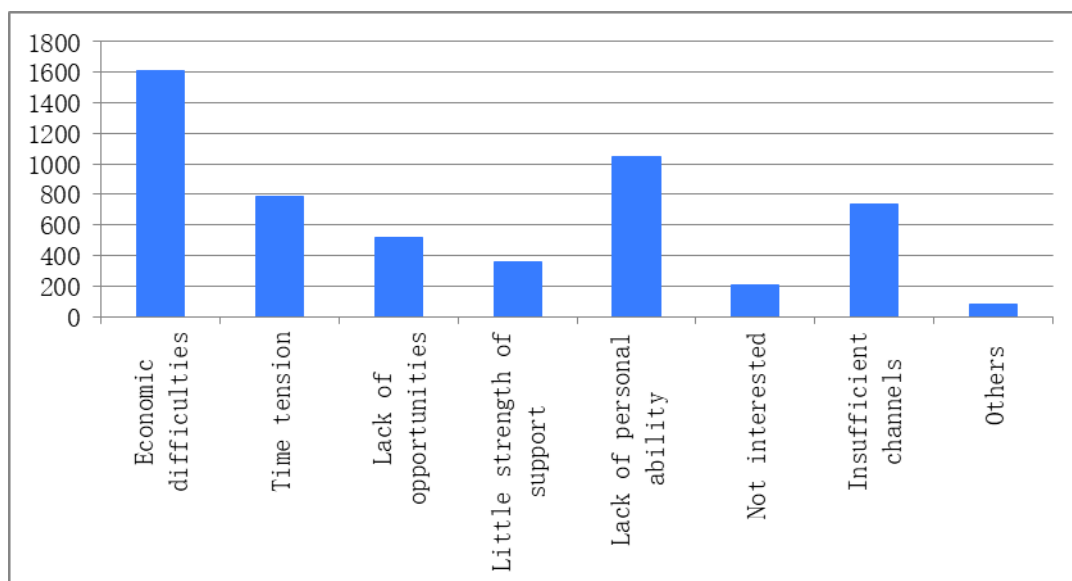
**Figure 2** Main Channels for the Improvement of International Ability of College Students from Poor Families



**Figure 3** Channels for College Students from Poor Families to Know International Projects and Policies



**Figure 4** Intention of College Students from Poor Families to Participate in International Learning Programs



**Figure 5** Main Factors Limited the Improvement of International Ability of College Students from Poor Families

As shown in Figure 1, the recognition of international ability by college students from poor families mainly focuses on language ability, cultural cognition, handling of international problems, professional knowledge as well as physical and mental state, and they have a high degree of recognition for the main components of international

ability. As shown in Figure 2, from the perspective of students, the main channels for college students from poor families to expand and improve their international ability are course learning, student activities, self-learning and exchange learning. From Figure 3, it can be seen that new media and traditional media platforms, teachers, counselors and classmates are the main channels of college students from poor families to know international projects and policies, as well as the main source of student information. From Figure 4, it can be seen that almost half of college students from poor families have the intention to participate in the international learning program, and thus improving their own international ability. As shown in Figure 5, the main factors hindering the improvement of international ability of college students from poor families are economic difficulty, insufficient personal competence, time tension and lack of channels.

### **III. ANALYSIS ON THE REASONS LIMITING THE IMPROVEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ABILITY OF COLLEGE STUDENTS FROM POOR FAMILIES**

#### *1. Students with weak foundation*

The weak foundation of college students from poor families is the primary problem that hinders the improvement of their international ability. The improvement of international ability shall be influenced by the dual role of material foundation and literacy foundation. The material foundation is the main difficulty to be faced by college students from poor families, and the primary factor hindering the improvement of their international ability. The literacy foundation decides the degree of improvement of international ability of college students from poor families, which has the decisive effect to the promotion effect.

On the one hand, college students from poor families have weak material foundation. The cost of college education is already a big expense for their families, and it is very difficult to invest more resources for more in-depth language learning, professional knowledge training, cross-cultural thinking training and developing the ability to solve international problems. Some parents have limited knowledge of internationalization, so they will doubt about the improvement of their children's international ability; on the other hand, the literacy foundation of college students from poor families is "in debt" due to weak foreign language level, inadequate understanding of internationalization, the lack of international vision and horizon, inadequate international ability, a certain gap of one or more of the basic quality with ordinary college students and the lack of enough time, energy and professional guidance. Even some students are not interested in internationalization completely and are step with the development of The Times.

## *2. Inadequate faculty*

The university is the battlefield for improving international ability of college students from poor families, the faculty is the key, and the classroom education and professional knowledge are core means to improve the international ability. These students lack necessary information acquisition means and resources due to family financial difficulties, so the faculty has become the main source to improve their international ability, and teachers and counselors are main mentors and helpers to cultivate their international ability, know international policies, expand personal international vision and thinking, and answer questions for them.

At present, the international faculty is inadequate, which cannot meet the actual demand for college students from poor families. On the one hand, teachers and counselors' international ability and attitude are uneven. Some teachers have limited foreign language level, and they have never participated in the relevant international projects and lack enough understanding of the significance of international ability to the students from poor families. A few teachers are stubborn about their own teaching experience and have a negative attitude towards improving students' international ability. On the other hand, the cognition and investment of international ability cultivation of teachers and counselors is insufficient, and their teaching concepts and ways cannot keep up with the development of The Times and the needs of students. Some teachers are young with limited international education level as well as insufficient teaching experience and methods, so they cannot effectively provide the education and teaching of international ability for students. The education methods of some counselors are relatively simple, which have not created a good international atmosphere among students.

## *3. Relatively closed channels*

Colleges and universities are the main channels of international ability education and support for college students, which is even the only channel for some students from poor families, and they have high expectations to colleges and universities. However, the cultivation channels of international ability of colleges and universities colleges and universities. The cultivation of international ability is also based on material investment, which seriously limits the improvement of international ability of the students from poor families, and the gap of international ability between them and ordinary students will be bigger and bigger.

In terms of course construction, professional course education and international education construction are unbalanced, and the cultivation of international ability has not gone deep into professional education; in the "second class activity", the from of international activities is relatively shallow, so the assistance of international ability to

the students from poor families is limited; at the same time, due to the limitation of student mobility, the systematic activities of international students and the learning atmosphere need to be improved; in terms of student communication, international students and domestic students are still two groups, and their communication is not smooth; in terms of policy and resource support, the development of international ability needs large investment, and the gap between the current investment and the needs of students from poor families is still large; in terms of overseas exchange program, there is an extreme lack of full subsidy or preferential places for the students from poor families, and the high cost is prohibitive. At present, there are various ways to improve the international ability in colleges and universities, but for the students from poor families, the channels are relatively closed, and there are some intangible limitations.

#### **IV. APPROACHES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ABILITY OF COLLEGE STUDENTS FROM POOR FAMILIES**

##### *1. Strengthen the faculty and optimize the course construction*

The faculty is the most convenient method for college students from poor families to improve the international ability. For strengthening the faculty for the cultivation of international ability, in the one hand, the international level of the teaching staff shall be fully improved, which shall introduce high-end talents with international vision and constantly improve the level of the teaching staff, and dispatch more teachers abroad for further study, lay a solid international foundation of the teaching staff, and strive to let every teacher in the campus have a certain of international education ability; on the other hand, the construction of education concept of international ability shall be improved, which shall embed the concept of international ability cultivation in every teacher and counselor, help them to consciously carry out international education in education activities, improve the international ability of the students from poor families in a subtle way, and lay a foundation for the smooth development of international ability cultivation.

The course construction is the most effective means to improve the international ability of college students from poor families. The optimization of course construction must be based on the fundamental task of strengthening moral education and cultivating people, and treat the course construction with a more high-end, open, and international concept. Firstly, improve the positioning and innovation methods, fully absorb advanced practices at home and abroad, formulate the teaching form and teaching content that are suitable for the improvement of students' international ability by combining with the situation, and comprehensively optimize the cultivation methods of international ability; secondly, keep up with international academic



frontiers, organically integrate the professional education and international education development, realize the synchronization of education teaching with internationalization, and comprehensively optimize the cultivation methods of international ability; thirdly, increase the investment of material resources and intellectual resources, promote the cultivation of international ability step by step, and comprehensively optimize the cultivation resources of international ability.

## *2. Strengthen the financial support and consolidate the cultivation channels*

The financial support of colleges and universities is the main external guarantee for the students from poor families to improve the international ability. Strengthening the financial support of international ability cultivation does not require undifferentiated funding, but to improve the funding system, strengthen material construction, achieve a high match between ability development and material support, and fully guarantee that the improvement of international ability of the students from poor families has the foundation, support and development. on the one hand, improve the construction of the ability funding system based on the needs of funding education, and encourage students to focus on improving their ability, carry out targeted learning, and improve their international ability; on the other hand, the material channels shall be expended. Colleges and universities shall actively seek social capital support while increasing the material support, expand the funding channels, deeply cooperate with overseas education institutions, and provide the training to the students from poor families for free or at a low price.

The channel support is an important channel to improve the international ability of college students from poor families. Unimpeded learning channels and deepened connotation building, firstly, carefully study the cultivation scheme, embed international education to every aspects of college education, multiple departments and channels take efforts to jointly shape the international ability of the students from poor families; secondly, build the “second classroom international activities’ with high quality, construct high-quality international education activities, pay attention to the long-term mechanism construction of the “second classroom activities”, and implement the international ability cultivation; thirdly, focus on tapping resources for multicultural exchange, build a learning exchange platform of domestic students and international students, and strengthen the cross-cultural communication and exchange ability of students; finally, optimize the resource allocation, actively absorb social resources, constantly provide more learning programs to excellent students from poor families, and form a good environment of awarding the best and supporting the talent among students.

### *3. Enrich the cultural environment and expand the practice projects*

Rich and diverse international learning environment is the internal requirement for cultivating the international ability. This internal requirement brings about new challenges to the construction and operation of the rich and diverse international learning environment, which is a direct carrier for college students from poor families to understand international culture, improve international vision, and realize cross-cultural cooperation and exchange. On the one hand, colleges and universities shall pay attention to the absorption and establishment of diverse international learning environment to absorb all technological and cultural knowledge elements that are conducive to the development of students and normatively guide students to study and seek knowledge; on the other hand, take various ways for publicity and guidance, make the international ability as well as the rich and diverse international culture rooted in the hearts of the students from poor families, and make this environment have practical help for students to the concept of international ability improvement.

International social practice activities are the practical path to improve the international ability of college students from poor families. Social practice is the practical path for the rapid development of the social experience and ability of college students, which will integrate international elements and social practice activities, expand the path of social practice, and realize the rapid improvement of competence and literacy. Firstly, give full play of international characteristics of the university, increase resource investment, and provide the support and guarantee for social practice of the students from poor families; secondly, strengthen professional guidance, especially teacher guidance, guarantee the effect of activities on ability improvement, and avoid formality of activities; thirdly, actively expand external resources, give play to regional industrial characteristics, cooperate with transnational enterprises or institutions, establish the practice base, and encourage the students from poor families to practice and study in transnational enterprises or institutions; fourthly, pay attention to the influence of international projects to increase the students' interest in exploring internationalization, improve their international vision, and exercise their ability and level of handling international affairs.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

The international ability cultivation of college students from poor families is the fundamental task of “strengthening moral education and cultivating people” of colleges and universities as well as the necessary measure to improve the cultivation quality of talents and expand the influence of higher education. For achieving the improvement of international ability of college students from poor families, colleges and universities are required to establish the cultivation concept of international

talents, optimize the top-level design of talent training, clarify the practical difficulty of student development, explore the balance between resource investment and talent output, strengthen the integration of colleges and universities and social international resources, mobilize all available resources to serve the growth of students, and form a joint force for international ability cultivation.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** This research is supported by the "Thirteenth Five-Year Plan" Project of Educational Science of Jiangsu Province. The project number is X-b/2018/02.

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