



Study on Model United Nations Activities to Improve the Overall Literacy of Young Students

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Abstract

The Model United Nations (MUN) aims to familiarize students with the workings of multilateral deliberative bodies such as the United Nations, international relations, and diplomacy through first-hand experience. It seeks to enhance young students' international perspective, promote a clearer understanding of the global landscape and politics, and deepen their understanding of the future implications of world events. Additionally, MUN aims to foster an appreciation for the differences between countries and cultivate respect for rules and laws. They will also develop a deeper understanding of the differences between countries and gain respect for rules and laws. This article is based on the complex international situation and aims to help students develop a comprehensive understanding of history and the global context, enabling them to accurately grasp the international situation. In this paper, we analyze and compile several domestic literature sources. This study employs an empirical research method, combining a questionnaire survey and interviews with the subjects of the questionnaire. The aim is to investigate and categorize the impact of Model United Nations activities on students' English ability, teamwork ability, speech and debate ability, multiculturalism, and international perspective. We examine these effects in five different aspects: region, exposure to participation in Model United Nations, time, and language category. The results of the questionnaire survey and the research on Model United Nations activities in China will be used as a reference to enhance students' overall literacy.

Keywords

Simulation of the United Nations, comprehensive literacy, young students

1. Model United Nations Activities

1.1 Introduction to Model United Nations

Model United Nations (MUN) originated in the United States. Young students play the role of diplomats of different countries by simulating diplomats of different countries and referring to the relevant rules of procedure. Through speeches and debates, they seek to maximize the interests of the country in which they are playing diplomats. Model United Nations, a simulation of meetings, forums, and institutional settings of the United Nations and related international institutions such as global or regional multilateral organizations, government cabinets, etc. (Yuanyuan Liu, 2022). In the process of speaking and communicating, students need to have a rigorous and meticulous logic system and thinking system, to break through the gap between various disciplines, observe the issues from an overall macro perspective, and speak in an

organized and persuasive manner, so that they can speak for their own country in order to. In this way, students' critical thinking skills, including dialectical thinking, strategic thinking, and global thinking, are enhanced in a subtle way. As an important academic platform of diplomacy for contemporary youth, MUN also allows students to broaden their horizons and gain self-confidence; and as a condensed world, MUN can make more thinking happen and better set up life goals.

1.2 Domestic Status and Research

Since Model United Nations activities entered China in the 1990s, they have been carried out in many universities and primary and secondary schools, and many schools use Model United Nations activities as a channel to cultivate students' comprehensive literacy. According to Yuanyuan Liu (2021), the promotion of MUN activities for the cultivation of English majors is mainly manifested in consolidating the basic skills of English majors, enhancing humanities and cross-cultural communication skills, strengthening professional competence, cultivating team consciousness, lifelong learning ability and innovation spirit, and exercising critical thinking (Yuanyuan Liu, 2022). According to Yino Dong, Yihao Chen, and Haoyang Yu (2021), the output-based learning method of "English + major + modal association" cultivates students' abilities of listening, speaking, reading, and writing English while cultivating their abilities of data retrieval and document writing, thus achieving the purpose of exercising their comprehensive English skills (Yinuo Dong et al., 2021). According to Mei Jiang (2021), "modal association" can broaden students' intellectual and cultural horizons, enhance their civic consciousness, responsibility, critical spirit, and creative literacy, and improve their higher-order thinking skills (Mei Jiang, 2021).

1.3 In this study, questionnaires were distributed to university students nationwide using the questionnaire method

A total of 94 valid questionnaires were collected, and by analyzing the questionnaires filled out by students who have already participated in MUN activities, it can be concluded that MUN activities cover most provinces in China.

More than 50% of students learn about and participate in MUN through their school clubs, and secondly, referrals and recommendations from students are also an important way for students to participate in MUN. Some school teachers also recommend MUN activities to students to broaden their knowledge and horizons, and some students learn about MUN activities through the Internet or through referrals from friends and family and other means. The results of the current data show that the majority of students are involved in MUN through their schools. School data accounts for a large part of the data.

From the analysis of the data obtained from the survey, about 80% of the students who participated in the survey started to participate in MUN activities in college, 13% in high school, and only 7% in junior high school.

2. The improvement of students' English ability

2.1 Improvement of students' English ability

According to the analysis of the questionnaire collected by the authors, 24% of the students thought that their English level improved very well after participating in MUN activities, 58% thought that their English level improved to some extent, and 12% thought that their English level improved little or not at all after participating in MUN activities. After collecting the questionnaires, the authors interviewed some of the students who participated in the questionnaires.

Among them, those students who thought that their English level had improved effectively thought that participating in MUN activities had greatly improved their English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Most of the MUN experience for this group of students was focused on the English Committee, which used English as the working language throughout the meeting in terms of English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Prior to the meeting, students are required to understand all aspects of a topic and complete an academic test in English based on the information they have collected. After completing the academic test, the dais team will review the student's completed academic test, give feedback, and make seat assignments. After receiving the results of the national seat assignments, students will be required to conduct pre-session research and analysis of the issue based on the issue and background document and write a national position paper in time to send to the dais team for review. During the session, young student delegates are required to read position papers, motions, discussions, debates, etc. Then the whole meeting, whether it is the dais team in the process of presiding over the meeting and commenting or the delegates in the pre-conference reading background literature, the meeting motion speech, consultation, debate and working paper, draft resolution writing process are all in English, in this process, students need to listen, read, write and speak English. Then, students will have a great exercise in listening and speaking skills when they participate in the English committee. Most of the students who think their English level has improved little or not at all are in the Chinese committee, or their English ability is poor and they feel very difficult or helpless in the English committee.

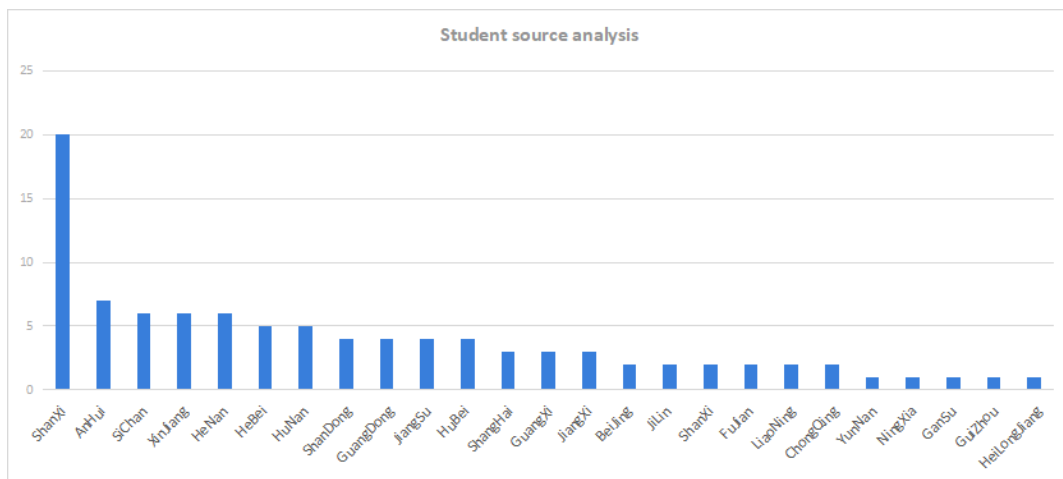


Figure 1. Student source analysis.

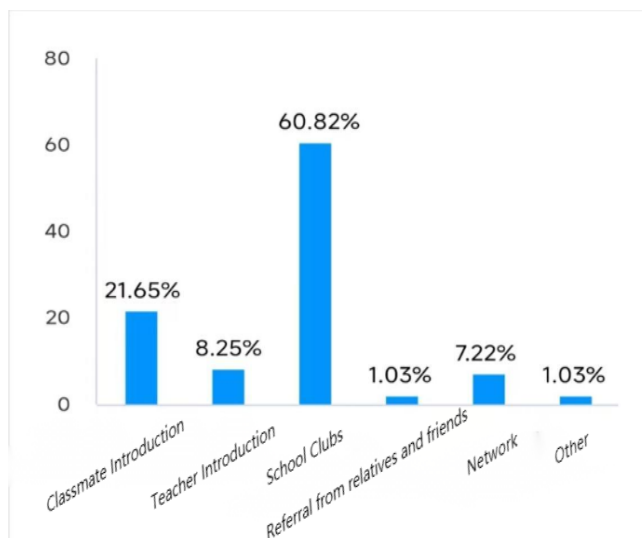


Figure 2. Participation in the Model League.

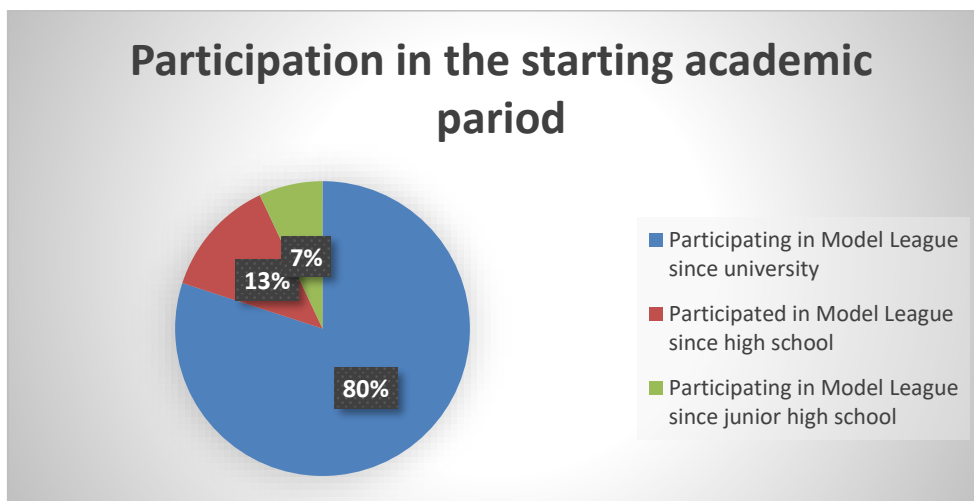


Figure 3. Participating in the starting period of the Model Union.

2.2 Improvement of teamwork ability

In MUN activities, after receiving the table of country seats, students need to conduct research and analysis according to the topic of the meeting, background guides, and the current situation of the assigned country, and discuss with other delegates before the meeting to make a motion list and Agenda, and make motions and consult together according to the motion list and Agenda. At the end of the third session, one or more draft resolutions are prepared based on the working papers prepared during the session, and all delegates vote on the draft resolutions during the fourth session.

Students need to be able to work as a team in consultation or discussion with other young student delegates. No one is an island, and no country exists alone in the world. At present, the world is undergoing the greatest change in a century, and in this environment, countries around the world are actively cooperating to share development opportunities and seek prosperity together. Similarly, as a simulation of the UN conference, young student delegates need to be grounded in the world and in reality to solve a problem together. In the Model United Nations activities, young student delegates actively collaborate and solve problems together, which is a great improvement in students' teamwork ability.

2.3 Improving speech and debate skills

Speech is an important part of MUN activities, it is very important to adjust your mind effectively before speaking on the stage and to speak in a language that is well-organized, logical, and rigorous. As a diplomat of a certain country, a young student representative represents a certain country in a meeting, so the ability to speak and debate is very important. In most of the meetings, the Presidium asks the delegates to speak off the record, and the young student delegates practice their speech and debate skills in the course of many speeches and consultations with others. According to the author's questionnaire, 56% of the students thought that participating in the Model League activities had a very good effect on their speech and debate skills, and 41% thought that they had some improvement. This also shows that Model League activities have a certain improvement in students' speech and debate ability.

2.4 Understanding multiculturalism and improving students' ability to collect and organize information and write

MUN activities require students to conduct research and analysis before and during the conference based on their assigned country, and to conduct academic resource searches. In the process of resource collection, students need to understand the history and culture of their assigned country, gradually form a national position, and write a position paper based on background guides. The performance of student delegates at the conference depends partly on their ability to perform on the spot and partly on their academic preparation prior to the conference. What the delegate will examine before the meeting are certain facts and principles that the represented country has already recognized within the UN system, or in other contexts, and which are reflected in agreements, treaties, or domestic legal acts, that require the delegate to conduct a complete academic resource search before the meeting. Discussions without complete research preparation are completely out of touch with reality and do not meet the academic and rigorous orientation of the modal activity for the conference. In the process of searching for materials, attention should also be paid to the credibility and authority of the materials themselves, as not all materials obtained through any search channel are worthy of adoption by the participants. Only if the sources and the materials themselves are credible will the delegates' positions and statements be more convincing because they are based on facts (Peking University, 2022). In the process, students not only learned about multiculturalism but also improved their ability to collect and organize information.

2.5 Enhance international vision

With the background of the current international situation, the simulated United Nations activities, based on China and looking to the world, can help to expand the international vision of contemporary college students (Qingshan Yin et al., 2019). The simulated UN conference focus on international hotspot issues helps to consolidate expertise. Simulated United Nations activities often pay attention to the current international hot spots, and take them as the topic of the venue (Zehao Wang et al., 2023). For international hot issues, students can combine news reports, daily communication, and access to relevant documents, conventions, agreements, laws and regulations, literature on this issue view, and the reality of hot events with their own life, let the students have "the rise and fall of the world, fortunes" ideas, at the same time improve the students own vision, let the students can better based on their own, look around the world. Before the simulated United Nations meeting, students need to understand the relevant committees and rules of procedure on the topics and to understand the relevant situation of friendly countries and non-friendly countries according to the topics and national allocation. Including but not limited to historical background, past policy documents, national political, economic,

cultural, religious and other aspects. In the process of understanding, it also indirectly improves the students' international vision, and it also helps and improves the future work and study of young students.

3. Conclusion

In question 39 of the New Standard Paper of the 2023 College Entrance Examination, the topic of the test is China's role in the global biosecurity challenge. Students are asked to draft a speech outlining China's position on biosecurity in their capacity as Chinese delegates to the UN Security Council meeting on biosecurity. This question is advantageous for candidates who have experience with Model United Nations (MUN). For this question, candidates need to grasp the basic principles of China's foreign policy, understand the concept of the community of human destiny, and make a basic judgment of the global biosecurity situation based on the provided materials. They should also be able to summarize China's achievements in addressing biosecurity issues. This question is open-ended and assesses students' comprehensive abilities.

Therefore, in the future, Model United Nations activities will be gradually expanded on campus and become a daily activity that students can participate in. This will greatly enhance their overall literacy skills. Students can also learn more about themselves, their country, and the world through Model United Nations (MUN) activities. Additionally, they can enrich their leisure time by combining work and leisure, allowing them to grow and develop more effectively.

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