

Research on applying virtual simulation teaching to train diplomatic talents in the context of major - power diplomacy

Yiming Xia^{1}, Qiuyang Yu¹*

¹Hubei University, Wuhan, China

*Corresponding Author. Email: 1544609870@qq.com

Abstract. Under the backdrop of major-power diplomacy in the New Era, university talent cultivation faces many new situations and challenges, including a more complex international landscape, the rise of data diplomacy, and incomplete curricular systems. At present, there remains a significant gap between the era's requirements and the existing status of higher-education training systems for diplomatic and foreign-affairs personnel. This study focuses on those gaps and explores how Hubei University's comprehensive virtual simulation experiment in diplomacy and foreign affairs can, as a technical teaching measure, help close the divide between training requirements and current practice. The aim is to provide effective measures for cultivating interdisciplinary, top-tier innovative diplomatic talents who possess global vision, professional competence, logical inductive ability, and political-ideological literacy.

Keywords: major-power diplomacy, virtual simulation experiment teaching, training of diplomatic and foreign-affairs personnel, interdisciplinary diplomatic talent, data interpretation — crisis simulation — cross-cultural governance

1. Introduction

As the international structure evolves at an accelerating pace, the global balance of power is undergoing profound changes, while the tide of technological revolution surges. Major-power competition has expanded from traditional geopolitical arenas into the digital domain [1]. The strategy of “major-power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics” proposed by General Secretary Xi Jinping aims to build a community with a shared future for mankind and to enhance China's international discourse power, thereby placing both strategic and technical demands on the cultivation of diplomatic and foreign-affairs talent in the New Era. At present, contests over data sovereignty have become a new focus in international relations; the issuance of the “Global Initiative on Cross-Border Data Flows Cooperation” marks that data-centered diplomacy has been elevated to a tool of national strategy. Against this backdrop, structural contradictions between traditional diplomatic talent training systems and emerging forms of diplomacy are increasingly evident, and there is an urgent need for systemic innovation to resolve developmental bottlenecks. General Secretary Xi Jinping has stressed that China's major-power diplomacy should reflect China's stature, seek broader understanding and support for the cause of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era, and contribute to building a community with a shared future for mankind. Based on this, the present study analyzes the era-specific requirements for diplomatic and foreign-affairs personnel under the New Era major-power diplomacy background and examines existing problems in current training systems. It then probes how Hubei University's comprehensive virtual simulation experiment in diplomacy and foreign affairs can remedy deficiencies in talent cultivation, providing intellectual support for training interdisciplinary, top-tier innovative diplomatic and foreign-affairs personnel with global vision, professional competence, logical inductive skills, and political-ideological literacy.

2. Literature review

Existing research has mostly focused on strengthening language skills and deepening area studies. Jianguo Yang and Maolin Li pointed out that Beijing Foreign Studies University, by virtue of its language advantages, the establishment and improvement of its School of International Relations, and the creation of an internationalized learning environment, has become a cradle of diplomatic talent. However, they also noted shortcomings in the alignment between language distribution and the depth of area studies [2]. Professor Jian Wang proposed the development of “Area and Country Studies” as an academic discipline, emphasizing that systematic theoretical construction, language training, fieldwork, and knowledge expansion in regional studies

are essential to accelerating the coordinated development of students' language proficiency, area knowledge, diplomatic expertise, and cross-cultural communication skills [3].

On the basis of language competence and mastery of theoretical knowledge in area studies, researchers have shifted attention to integrating both into applied scenarios for diplomatic and foreign-affairs talent. Accordingly, Model United Nations (MUN) activities have received widespread attention for their educational value. Haitao Wang argued that MUN activities play a crucial role in broadening students' international horizons. They help cultivate students' skills in public speaking, improvisation, critical thinking, teamwork, leadership, and public communication, thereby enhancing their overall competence [4]. Zhiqiang Chen, in his study of implementing and reflecting on MUN activities in high school political science classes, emphasized their importance in improving students' international communication skills, cross-cultural competence, and comprehensive abilities. He further suggested enriching teaching formats and integrating simulation activities to strengthen students' practical skills and global vision. Such research provides theoretical support and practical guidance for applying MUN activities in education, contributing to better cultivation of students' international outlook and comprehensive abilities [5].

Despite these explorations, significant gaps remain in the training of diplomatic and foreign-affairs talent. On the one hand, existing studies have not yet fully integrated interdisciplinary education, virtual simulation teaching, and digital literacy training, making it difficult to meet the multifaceted needs of diplomatic talent in the New Era. On the other hand, teaching practices in many universities lag behind; students are often not provided with sufficient opportunities for internships in international organizations or for hands-on cross-border data research. As a result, curricula struggle to keep pace with the rise of "data-centered diplomacy," leading to a disconnect between the talent cultivated and the needs of national strategy. Meanwhile, most universities still rely primarily on classroom lectures, leaving students without adequate practical exposure to international institutions or cross-border data research. Moreover, existing research has yet to fully address how MUN activities can be more effectively incorporated into mainstream teaching systems, or how differentiated teaching strategies can be developed for students of varying age groups and disciplinary backgrounds.

This study aims to construct a data-empowered, interdisciplinary training system for diplomatic talent by integrating virtual simulation technologies with interdisciplinary educational resources. It explores an innovative pathway that combines "language competence — regional cognition — digital literacy." The research is grounded in interdisciplinary education theory, virtual simulation teaching theory, and digital literacy theory. Regarding interdisciplinary education, Juan Wang noted that the concept first emerged in the 1930s at the University of Minnesota, which offered comprehensive courses. Drawing on comparative education models in different countries, she proposed various classification standards, offering both conceptual and practical insights for this study [6]. At the level of virtual simulation teaching, Jun Zeng clarified the definition of virtual simulation experiments and highlighted the principle of intuitive teaching, thus providing a theoretical foundation for this study [7]. With respect to digital literacy, UNESCO's Global Framework of Digital Literacy (2018) defined it as "the ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate, and create information safely and appropriately through digital technologies for employment, decent work, and entrepreneurship." Building on this, the present study proposes a three-dimensional competence model of "data interpretation — crisis simulation — cross-cultural governance." By incorporating frontier issues such as data sovereignty games and cross-border data flows into curriculum design, the model aims to strengthen students' strategic decision-making abilities in the digital era.

3. The contemporary requirements for training diplomatic and foreign-affairs talent

In the context of major-power diplomacy, diplomatic and foreign-affairs personnel have become a key force in representing national image, safeguarding national interests, and promoting international cooperation. Their role on the international stage has grown increasingly indispensable. As the global landscape becomes ever more complex and volatile, and as politics, economics, and culture engage in deeper interaction and collision worldwide, the question of how to strengthen the training of diplomatic personnel, and how to cultivate a team of professionals who are interdisciplinary, internationally minded, and equipped with cross-cultural knowledge, has emerged as a necessary condition for advancing the vigorous development of China's major-power diplomacy.

Accordingly, diplomatic talent in this era must possess the following qualities: First, global vision. Diplomatic professionals should remain well-informed about international affairs and hot-button issues, while maintaining sensitivity and foresight regarding the dynamics of the international situation. This means not only keeping abreast of daily world news, but also being able to look beyond appearances to uncover underlying patterns, and to distill the deeper implications of events for international relations and the global order [9]. For example, when the Russia-Ukraine conflict broke out, skilled diplomatic personnel could promptly assess its chain reactions in European geopolitics, global energy markets, and food security, thereby providing forward-looking references for China's diplomatic strategy. Second, professional expertise. They must have in-depth knowledge of specific regions, especially those closely related to China's foreign policy, in order to provide necessary background for diplomatic judgment and decision-making. Taking countries along the Belt and Road Initiative as an example, diplomatic personnel must thoroughly understand each country's historical culture, political system, economic model, and social customs.

Such knowledge enables them to facilitate cooperation in infrastructure connectivity and trade and investment liberalization, while accounting for local realities, mitigating risks, and achieving mutually beneficial outcomes. Third, logical inductive ability. Diplomatic talent should be able to generalize from the principles observed in the foreign affairs of specific states or regions to identify overarching rules and patterns. For instance, in studying the diplomacy of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), by analyzing the commonalities and differences among member states in areas such as regional economic integration, territorial dispute management, and external security cooperation, diplomatic personnel can derive the operational model and decision-making logic of ASEAN diplomacy as a whole. Such insights offer strategic guidance for deepening China–ASEAN cooperation. Fourth, political and ideological literacy. Diplomatic work is inherently political and ideologically charged, requiring practitioners to maintain a firm political stance and sharp political discernment. In international interactions, faced with diverse schools of thought and competing interests, diplomatic personnel must adhere to the bottom line of safeguarding national sovereignty, security, and development interests, and always align with the country’s diplomatic policies. For example, when confronted with unfounded China-related claims in the international public opinion arena, they must be able to respond effectively with facts and appropriate diplomatic discourse, thus defending the nation’s image and reputation. At the same time, they should internalize and practice the guiding principles of China’s major-power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, embedding concepts such as building a community with a shared future for mankind into daily diplomatic practice, and working to promote international cooperation toward greater fairness, justice, and inclusiveness.

4. Problems in the training of diplomatic and foreign-affairs talent

Having clarified the qualities required of diplomatic and foreign-affairs talent under the context of major-power diplomacy, it is equally important to recognize that cultivating high-caliber personnel who meet these requirements is not a simple task. Although current training efforts have achieved some results, they still face multiple challenges and shortcomings. In terms of students’ disciplinary knowledge structures, there is a clear imbalance: students in language-focused universities often concentrate excessively on language skill training, while neglecting the accumulation of interdisciplinary knowledge in international relations, diplomatic practice, and related fields. Conversely, students in non-language majors frequently lack practical foreign-language skills, limiting their access to cutting-edge international information. Regarding practical ability, many universities still emphasize theoretical instruction while lacking effective mechanisms for hands-on training. This hampers students’ understanding of the complexity and dynamic nature of international affairs and prevents them from connecting theory with practice. In terms of political and ideological literacy, some candidates exhibit weaknesses in navigating complex global environments, which may impair their ability to correctly grasp national interests and foreign-policy directions and leave them vulnerable to external ideological interference. Recognizing these issues is essential for targeted improvements that can provide solid talent support for China’s major-power diplomacy.

4.1. Imbalanced disciplinary knowledge structure

Currently, students’ disciplinary knowledge structures exhibit notable imbalances. General Secretary Xi Jinping has emphasized that the country must build a foreign-affairs workforce that is loyal to the Party, the country, and the people; politically steadfast; professionally competent; disciplined; and ethically sound. He further highlighted the need to strengthen ideological education and enhance the professional and comprehensive abilities of foreign-affairs personnel [10]. Yet, there remains a gap between these requirements and the current situation across different types of universities and students.

Students at language-focused universities tend to overemphasize language skills while neglecting interdisciplinary knowledge in international relations and diplomatic practice. This results in a superficial understanding of current affairs and international hotspots, hindering their ability to analyze global developments from a multi-disciplinary perspective and develop sensitive and forward-looking macro-level insights into world affairs. Students in non-language majors, meanwhile, often lack adequate foreign-language proficiency, limiting their ability to access primary sources and cutting-edge information, and preventing them from cultivating the broad international vision required for core competencies. Furthermore, the imbalance in disciplinary knowledge affects students’ understanding of specific regions. Language-focused students generally lack specialized knowledge in area studies, while non-language students cannot easily access first-hand information through language advantages. As a result, both groups fall short of the core competency of possessing in-depth regional knowledge to inform diplomatic decision-making. This creates a situation in which many candidates may enter recruitment processes without truly meeting the requirements for broad international vision and specialized regional knowledge, making them ill-prepared for the demands of diplomatic work and creating a scarcity of talent capable of fulfilling diplomatic positions.

4.2. Insufficient practical training

Many universities continue to adopt talent-training models that are overly focused on theory and lack effective mechanisms for practical training [8]. This prevents students from gaining a deep understanding of the complexity and dynamic nature of international affairs and limits their ability to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations, thereby hindering the development of global awareness and foresight. Many candidates may understand international affairs in theory, but fail to demonstrate insight and accurate judgment in simulated diplomatic scenarios or case analyses, revealing deficiencies in practical competence. From a professional perspective, insufficient practical training means that students often lack the experience and problem-solving skills necessary to handle real-world regional diplomatic issues. Even when they possess theoretical knowledge, they are unable to apply it effectively in practice, limiting their ability to provide targeted diplomatic advice and failing to meet the core requirement of professional competence. During interviews or simulated exercises, candidates may struggle to address region-specific diplomatic issues, demonstrating gaps in their practical readiness. Regarding logical inductive ability, actual diplomatic scenarios require the capacity to generalize rules and methodologies from the diplomatic practices of different countries or regions. However, due to insufficient practical training, students lack hands-on experience and cannot summarize effective diplomatic rules from real-world cases, leaving this ability underdeveloped and creating a gap with the core competency requirements. When analyzing diplomatic cases or resolving real-world problems, candidates may fail to clearly extract patterns and methods, which negatively affects their performance in selection processes. In summary, deficiencies in practical training severely limit students' development in global vision, professional competence, and logical inductive ability, creating challenges in the selection of qualified diplomatic and foreign-affairs personnel.

4.3. Need for enhanced political and ideological literacy

Diplomatic work is inherently political and ideologically sensitive, requiring practitioners to maintain firm political stances and acute political discernment. The current international environment is complex and volatile, with external adverse forces increasingly active, propaganda methods constantly evolving, and the influence of harmful ideologies becoming more subtle and pervasive. Some candidates display weaknesses in political and ideological literacy under such conditions, making it difficult to accurately grasp national interests and foreign-policy directions, and leaving them susceptible to external ideological interference. This gap in political and ideological literacy conflicts with the core competency requirements for diplomatic personnel.

China's major-power diplomacy carries unique concepts and strategic principles, demanding that diplomatic personnel possess the correct political and ideological literacy to accurately interpret and implement these policies. Students lacking sufficient ideological grounding may fail to integrate national diplomatic concepts into practical work or to express China's intentions accurately in diplomatic settings, thereby undermining the advancement of China's major-power diplomacy. Even if such candidates enter diplomatic positions, their inability to effectively implement national foreign-policy goals and concepts constitutes a significant challenge to cultivating qualified personnel.

5. Countermeasures to existing problems in diplomatic and foreign-affairs talent training: insights from the “Hubei University virtual foreign-affairs simulation comprehensive experiment”

Faced with the multiple challenges in training diplomatic and foreign-affairs talent, Hubei University's project, “Construction and Application of Virtual Simulation Experiment Technology for Foreign Affairs and Diplomacy in the Context of a Century of Global Transformation”, was developed. The project targets the problems identified above, providing innovative teaching models and technological solutions to cultivate diplomatic talent that meets contemporary demands. The platform introduces a large volume of diverse cases, builds a “regional knowledge repository,” creates an immersive environment with high-fidelity scenarios, incorporates vivid real-world examples, integrates ideological and political education, and establishes immersive multilateral cooperation simulations. In its instructional design, two innovative modules—press conferences and Model United Nations simulations—enable students to enhance their practical skills. Teaching methods employ immersive techniques, incorporate ideological guidance, autonomous learning, and humanistic integration, comprehensively enhancing student competencies. The assessment system is also innovative, implementing full-process evaluation to ensure teaching quality.

5.1. Platform overview

In the context of major-power diplomacy, the competence and quality of diplomatic and foreign-affairs personnel directly affect national image, interests, and international cooperation outcomes. Hubei University's project addresses current training difficulties and aims to cultivate interdisciplinary talent aligned with contemporary needs.

The project leverages Hubei University's professional teaching and research teams along with enterprise technical support, centering on a three-dimensional competency model of "data interpretation—crisis simulation—cross-cultural governance." Instructional design incorporates the two modules of press conferences and Model United Nations simulations. Through virtual-to-real integration, students aiming for careers in foreign affairs can experience immersive simulations of institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations, thereby improving practical skills. Teaching methods employ immersive approaches, integrate ideological and political education, autonomous learning, and cultural immersion, fully enhancing student competencies.

The programme focuses on cultivating talents with a variety of key qualities. Through simulating real-life scenarios, students can understand international affairs, analyse complex situations and cultivate a global perspective; case studies of specific regions deepen students' knowledge of different regions and enhance their professionalism; students are guided to summarize the rules of diplomacy from diplomatic practice and exercise their logical induction ability; and in simulated diplomatic activities, students' political stance and ability to carry out diplomatic concepts are strengthened and their ideological and political qualities are enhanced.

Expected outcomes include a project completion report and a fully functional virtual simulation system. This system will be applied in both undergraduate and graduate courses to familiarize students with foreign-affairs workflows, mastery of global governance rules, and preparation of high-quality talent for the diplomatic field, contributing to China's major-power diplomacy development.

5.2. Countermeasure analysis

(1) Addressing Imbalanced Disciplinary Knowledge and Reshaping Core Competencies

1. Expanding Global Vision: From Limitation to Multidisciplinary Integration

In the past, language-focused universities often overemphasized language skills, while interdisciplinary courses such as international relations occupied a small portion of the curriculum. This limited students' ability to analyze the deeper geopolitical and economic dimensions of international events. For example, when studying the Syrian crisis, students could mostly perform simple news translation but lacked the capacity to dissect the complex geopolitical and economic disputes behind the headlines. Conversely, students in non-language majors, despite having subject-specific knowledge, often face barriers in accessing foreign-language sources and keeping up with international research.

The foreign-affairs virtual simulation platform introduces a wide range of cases, such as a Model United Nations session discussing the 9/11 issue. In this scenario, students play the roles of country representatives. They must first leverage their language skills to communicate fluently with other "representatives," articulating their country's stance and demands regarding post-9/11 responses. Simultaneously, they must understand the differing reactions and attitudes of other countries, requiring precise regional cognition to recognize variations in counterterrorism policies, security measures, and international cooperation—for instance, understanding the United States' stringent counterterrorism measures and differences in cooperation among other states. Additionally, students collect and analyze relevant data, such as countries' counterterrorism investments and terrorist activity frequency, demonstrating strong data literacy. By statistically analyzing these data and comparing the effectiveness of different strategies, they integrate multidisciplinary knowledge to weigh advantages and disadvantages and formulate informed policy positions. This process enables students to transcend language and disciplinary boundaries, cultivating a comprehensive global vision for understanding international dynamics.

2. Deepening Professional Expertise: From Surface Understanding to Precise Insight

Previous studies on Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) countries have often remained superficial, with most students only aware of geographical locations but lacking detailed knowledge of trade regulations or religious and cultural specifics along the routes.

The platform establishes a regional knowledge repository covering political, economic, and cultural details of various countries. In simulated press conference scenarios, students act as spokespersons presenting BRI achievements. They must use precise and appropriate language to convey information to domestic and international media, accurately explain project progress metrics—such as the annual increase in Laos–China railway mileage and its economic impact—and respond to investment-related inquiries according to local regulations and cultural norms. By integrating language proficiency, regional cognition, and data literacy, students develop specialized skills to address region-specific diplomatic issues with precision and effectiveness.

(B) Addressing Gaps in Practical Ability and Strengthening Core Competencies

1. Integrating Theory and Practice: Activating New Momentum for Global Vision

Traditional teaching often separates theory from practice. In some universities, international politics programs are heavily weighted toward theoretical courses, with few and monotonous practical simulations. As a result, students struggle to connect theory with real-world events, making it difficult to analyze complex international issues, such as the U.S.–China trade friction, or to formulate pragmatic strategies.

The virtual simulation platform creates immersive environments, such as simulating the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear issue. Students assume roles as representatives from North Korea, the U.S., China, South Korea, Japan, and Russia, negotiating over denuclearization, sanctions relief, and peace agreements. On one hand, they apply knowledge of international

relations theory, international law, and nuclear non-proliferation frameworks to articulate positions—for example, proposing a denuclearization roadmap based on the Non-Proliferation Treaty, regional security balance, and humanitarian considerations. On the other hand, students perform crisis simulations, using real-time negotiation progress, nuclear facility monitoring data, and sanctions assessment to anticipate risks of military conflict, potential diplomatic mediation, and humanitarian developments. By modeling various outcomes—regional arms races, sanctions backlash, international public opinion pressures—students learn to adjust strategies and negotiation flexibility in real time, developing strategic thinking and integrating global vision with crisis management.

2. Accumulating Practical Experience: Building a Professional Competence Fortress

Previously, students lacked genuine diplomatic experience, leaving them unprepared for real-world issues such as territorial disputes. Simulated diplomacy competitions reveal that many students employ simplistic negotiation strategies in scenarios like the South China Sea disputes, often failing to leverage historical, legal, or geopolitical insights.

The platform provides high-fidelity simulation scenarios, ranging from territorial disputes to cross-border data flow conflicts. Take a cross-border data flow dispute as an example: in repeated simulation exercises, students first apply their data analysis skills to examine key information such as the types, volumes, and directions of the data involved, assessing its potential impact on their country's economy and security. Next, drawing on their understanding of foreign cultures and policies, they engage in cross-cultural governance, analyzing the opposing side's positions and demands regarding data protection and data sovereignty to identify mutually acceptable solutions. At the same time, students use data to substantiate their arguments, presenting detailed evidence to justify their country's data management policies, anticipating the other party's responses, simulating multiple rounds of negotiation, and developing contingency plans through crisis scenarios—thereby accumulating practical strategies and building professional competence.

Take the Russia–Georgia conflict as another example. This event not only involved military confrontation but also complex issues of data sovereignty and information security. In simulation exercises, students analyze related cases of cross-border data flows, such as Russia's deployment of various cyberattack methods during the conflict—including distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks aimed at disrupting Georgia's critical information systems, stealing intelligence, and even paralyzing key infrastructure in transportation, energy, and finance. Western countries, in turn, provided cybersecurity assistance to help Georgia strengthen its domestic network defenses. These actions highlight the growing significance of cyber warfare in modern conflicts and underscore the critical role of data sovereignty and information security in international relations [11,12]. Consequently, students must understand each side's specific practices and positions regarding data management and protection, interpret the type, scale, and flow direction of data during the conflict, assess the potential impact on national security and economic interests, and develop negotiation strategies that balance the interests of both parties.

Through such simulation-based practice, students gain a deep understanding of the role of cross-border data flows in international conflicts, enhance their professional capacity to handle complex international data disputes, and lay a solid foundation for addressing similar challenges in future diplomatic work.

3. Strengthening Logical Induction: Illuminating Diplomatic Intelligence

Traditional teaching often relies on passive knowledge delivery, leaving students few opportunities to actively synthesize and generalize insights. For example, analyses of international peacekeeping often involve students copying textbook viewpoints without extracting overarching principles.

The news conference module of the virtual simulation platform introduces abundant real-world cases, providing students with opportunities to practice logical induction and diplomatic reasoning. For instance, in the China–Africa Economic and Trade Expo, students act as journalists or Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokespersons, formulating questions and answers based on national interests and international opinion. This process hones logical induction, expressive skills, and professional knowledge of global affairs. During these simulations, students analyze China–Africa diplomatic and economic engagement, noting the strategic influence, humanitarian investments (medical, educational), and infrastructure projects undertaken by China. They study China's responses to trade disruptions, flexible policy adjustments, and bilateral communication strategies, gaining insight into risk mitigation. Cross-cultural communication exercises allow students to understand local customs and governments, fostering cooperation, trust, and support, which underpin successful international trade and diplomacy. Quizzes on basic knowledge of China–Africa trade further reinforce students' understanding of current affairs.

Through these analyses and practical exercises, students gain comprehensive understanding of political, economic, and strategic considerations, acquire skills to manage unexpected events and cross-cultural coordination, and enhance logical reasoning and diplomatic decision-making—building a strong foundation for future careers in foreign affairs and diplomacy.

(3) Enhancing Ideological and Political Literacy: Bridging Core Competency Gaps Through the Platform

1. Political Positioning: Strengthening the Foundation of Diplomatic Principles

The virtual simulation platform integrates ideological and political education throughout its activities, such as simulated international public opinion battles. Students act as Chinese representatives, responding to misinformation by applying national principles such as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and the Community of Shared Future for Mankind. Using concrete data, they refute false claims—for example, when Western critics label China's aid to Africa as “neo-colonialism,” students cite infrastructure projects in Africa including roads, railways, hospitals, and schools, demonstrating tangible contributions to local

development. Additionally, the news conference module aligns with President Xi Jinping's call for proactive foreign communication, reflecting the modern journalistic principle of "telling China's story well and transmitting China's voice." This module reinforces national security awareness and cultivates a strong sense of patriotism and national responsibility among students.

2. Practicing Diplomatic Philosophy: Promoting Responsible Major Power Engagement

Traditional training often leaves students with superficial understanding of China's major-power diplomatic philosophy. In simulations of international cooperation, students struggle to apply principles such as win-win cooperation and multilateralism.

The platform addresses this by creating immersive multilateral negotiation scenarios, such as the post-war reconstruction conference for Syria. Students assume roles of representatives from China, the U.S., Russia, the EU, and other stakeholders, negotiating issues including sanctions removal, reconstruction funding, and project allocation. They apply international relations theory, international law, and geopolitics, proposing reconstruction plans in line with the UN Charter, regional security needs, and humanitarian concerns. Simultaneously, students conduct crisis simulations, integrating dynamic data such as economic aid contributions, sanctions impacts, domestic political developments in Syria, and international reactions. They anticipate military risks, diplomatic interventions, and humanitarian crises, evaluating cascading effects such as regional arms races, economic backlash, and international public opinion pressures. By iteratively adjusting strategies in these immersive exercises, students cultivate strategic thinking and develop the ability to navigate complex global security environments, effectively merging global vision with crisis management in practical diplomatic contexts.

6. Conclusion

Against the backdrop of major-power diplomacy and data-driven diplomacy, this study focuses on the cultivation of foreign affairs and diplomatic talent, analyzing existing challenges and exploring innovative solutions through the Hubei University Virtual Diplomacy Simulation Lab, achieving progress in both theoretical and practical dimensions.

Theoretically, the study integrates interdisciplinary education, virtual simulation teaching, and digital literacy frameworks to construct an innovative pathway of "Language Ability – Regional Cognition – Data Literacy" and a competency model of "Data Interpretation – Crisis Simulation – Cross-Cultural Governance." This framework expands the theoretical system for talent cultivation and provides new ideas for addressing the limitations of traditional training models. Practically, the Hubei University virtual simulation lab has yielded notable results. Simulated UN conferences and press briefing scenarios incorporate real-world cases, immersing students in diplomatic environments. Through these exercises, students strengthen foundational skills and demonstrate measurable progress in core competencies, providing a replicable model for universities to cultivate multifaceted diplomatic talent, ultimately enhancing the quality of talent development to meet national strategic needs.

However, there remains room for improvement. The international landscape is constantly evolving, requiring the virtual simulation curriculum to be updated continuously so that students engage with cutting-edge diplomatic issues. Moreover, virtual simulations cannot fully replace real-world diplomatic practice; future efforts should explore ways to combine both approaches, offering students richer practical experiences to better adapt to international environments. This study offers a novel perspective and methodology for cultivating diplomatic talent and lays the groundwork for further exploration, ultimately contributing to the development of a new generation of capable professionals for China's diplomatic endeavors.

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