

EcCoWell Community Recovery Program

Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences

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Beijing community colleges have an important role in the development of the Beijing learning city, often in partnership with universities. This report by the Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences discusses the activities of two community colleges during the COVID19 pandemic: Beijing Agricultural Radio and Television School and Chaoyang Community College for Seniors. The activities of these colleges may be compared with the work of similar institutions in the Datong Taipei and Harlem New York reports. All point to the important role of community colleges, and similar cultural institutions in combating exclusion and building community.

After great efforts, the city of Beijing effectively controlled the development of the covid-19 pandemic from February 2020. Although the city experienced traumas in the shadow of the pandemic, the government set strict policy rules to regulate every aspect of people's ordinary lives, such as the use of face masks in public areas and the public transport system. Most schools, regardless of the education level, have been closed from March to August in Beijing, and follow the principle of "No Schooling but don't stop learning" with online teaching and distance learning.

The report "The 2007 Decision on promoting the building of Learning Cities in Beijing" illustrates that Beijing has a strong motivation to build a sustainable learning city, not only socio-economically but also culturally. In the context of building the learning city, helping citizens recovery from the pandemic emotionally and mentally, and preparing them to improve vocational skills for a possible recession, has become the social responsibility of Beijing community colleges. This paper selects two colleges as cases to illustrate community colleges' efforts and actions.

A. Beijing Agricultural Radio and Television School, Changping Branch, “teaching in the air” program

Beijing Agricultural Radio and Television School, Changping Branch, is affiliated with Changping Community College. Built in 1983, the school has a primary focus on secondary, and higher vocational training especially provided to farmers. The school has been closed since March, in accordance with the policies adopted during the pandemic, but carried on its “teaching in the air” program to help and instruct rural people and farmer trainees through learning and training at home.

The program is divided into three parts. The school enrolment of 750 students is divided into 19 Wechat¹ groups. There are assigned a class adviser and technical assistance to help each Wechat group to manage their courses. The school provides multiple online courses from The Central Agriculture Radio and Television School, and other administrative departments providing agriculture courses. The available courses range from the prevention and control COVID-19, to vegetable and fruit tree planting, among many others. These courses are close to learners’ daily lives, and are easy to understand. According to the course arrangements, and the actual situation, the school regularly provides course resources and links to farmer students twice or three times a week. As the last step, learners can share their results with their Wechat group at any time, and if they have any problems on certain courses, the teacher in charge will give feedback to the teacher, in trying to meet the needs of the learners.

The program mainly uses online live lectures, video applications and some Wechat Official Accounts to provide courses. “Intelligent Farm Cloud” applications are used as major teaching online platforms. These applications are easy to operate and have a rich agricultural content. Learners can select courses that they are interested in. Online live lectures are integrated in these applications. “Fighting the pandemic, preserving spring ploughing and promoting production” is a online live lecture given by Beijing Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, which includes techniques for management of spring fruit trees, and a strawberry training series from daily care to marketing modes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

B. Chaoyang community College for seniors “fighting the COVID-19” cloud-based program

Chaoyang Community College for seniors officially opened in 2016 with four major strands with programmes in music performance (piano, dance, vocal), painting (calligraphy, Chinese painting, western painting), photography and English. The start of the pandemic coincided with the start of the new semester for senior students of the 2020 class. The college initiated a “Fighting the COVID-19 pandemic” cloud-based program. The cloud is located in the colleges’ online platform, for cooperation with the Wechat group, the online classroom, and education resources and courses.

¹ This is a Chinese multi-purpose messaging, social media and mobile payment app developed by Tencent.

In order to strengthen the learning enthusiasm of senior learners, the college developed a teaching model “B+2P” (Basic plus Parallel resources and Practice). If we take music as an example, senior learners need to understand basic numbered musical notation, learn extended content of music to better understand the course, and practice to use the instrument as a outcome.

The college promotes a “three learning and two evaluation” which runs through the whole of online teaching. “Three leaning” mainly refers to online independent learning, live Q&A learning, and WeChat small application interactive learning. “Two evaluation” refers to teacher and students evaluating each other while students also evaluate each other.

An online exhibition of Painting and Calligraphy from senior learners was held by the college, which expressed their confidence and belief in the outcome of fighting COVID-19.

In conclusion, despite the strict school closure policy, Beijing Community Colleges searched for ways to attract more learners and satisfy the learning needs of every learner, so that no one was left behind during this pandemic. Beijing, as the capital of China, is also a developed area, benefiting from the popularization and information development of mobile phones and laptops. Community colleges can teach through applications using mobile phones and computers, but online teaching still faces the challenges faced by all education in adapting to turbulent change.. As schools have continued to open since June, more community colleges use innovative online and offline teaching models to deal with requirements in recovery from the pandemic.