

# **Research on the Path and Mode of Narrative Ability Cultivation for Business Students in Normal Universities from the Perspective of New Liberal Arts: Taking Accounting Students as an Example**

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**Abstract:** With the continuous advancement of the New Liberal Arts initiative, higher education increasingly emphasizes interdisciplinary integration and the cultivation of comprehensive competencies. Narrative ability, as a critical cognitive and expressive skill, plays an essential role in enhancing business students' critical thinking, problem-solving capacity, and practical application abilities. Taking accounting students in normal universities as an example, this paper systematically analyzes the significance, current status, and challenges of narrative ability cultivation. The study identifies key problems such as insufficient curricular attention, weak interdisciplinary integration, unclear evaluation standards, and limited practice-oriented teaching models. In response, this paper proposes targeted teaching reform paths, including curriculum system optimization, innovative teaching models, diversified evaluation mechanisms, faculty development, and practice platform construction. The findings aim to provide a feasible and replicable framework for improving the quality of business education under the New Liberal Arts paradigm.

**Keywords:** New Liberal Arts; Narrative Ability; Business Education; Normal Universities; Accounting Students

## **1. Introduction**

Under the background of the New Liberal Arts, higher education reform increasingly emphasizes interdisciplinary integration and the cultivation of students' comprehensive abilities. For business students in normal universities, narrative ability has become an important competence connecting

professional knowledge, critical thinking, and practical application.

## **2. Significance of the Research**

### **2.1 Theoretical Significance**

(1) Narrative ability as a way of thinking

Narrative ability is not merely a linguistic skill but also a cognitive approach for understanding and reconstructing complex realities. Through contextualized storytelling, accounting students can integrate economic, social, and ethical dimensions into problem analysis, thereby enhancing their cognitive depth and interpretive capacity [1]. Studies indicate that narrative thinking significantly improves learners' understanding of complex issues [2]. Herman argues that narrative theory provides a powerful interdisciplinary framework that supports meaning-making and reflective learning in higher education, particularly in complex professional fields. For accounting students in normal universities, narrative thinking helps contextualize abstract business concepts within social and ethical environments, thereby enhancing their comprehensive understanding and analytical depth. From the perspective of the New Liberal Arts, the cultivation of narrative ability thus represents a key pathway for promoting interdisciplinary integration and advancing holistic talent development [3].

(2) Enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills

Business education emphasizes that students should have certain critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Narrative, as a way of thinking, can stimulate accounting students to reflect on social phenomena, and then promote their critical thinking. Studies have found that narrative methods can effectively enhance accounting students' problem analysis and

solution skills in actual situations [4].

(3) Interdisciplinary theoretical integration

The new liberal arts emphasizes the integration of different disciplines, and the cultivation of narrative ability is an interdisciplinary process. Knowledge in fields such as economics, sociology, and literature can be integrated with each other through narrative, thereby enhancing students' ability to understand complex issues [5]. This interdisciplinary educational model is of great significance in the cultivation of business accounting students.

(4) Enhance the quality of education in normal colleges and universities

Through cultivating narrative ability, it can promote the content innovation and method reform of teacher education, and improve the comprehensive quality of business accounting students in normal colleges and universities. Studies have shown that the use of narrative methods can increase accounting students' participation and improve learning outcomes [6]. Therefore, the cultivation of narrative ability is an effective way to improve the quality of education in normal colleges and universities.

## 2.2 The Practical Significance of the Study

(1) Adapt to the educational needs of the new era

Modern society has a strong demand for compound talents with high comprehensive quality and able to adapt to changes. The cultivation of narrative ability helps business students adapt to the requirements of the new era of education and improve their ability to solve complex problems [7]. The cultivation of this ability can help accounting students better cope with the challenges of the future workplace and meet the needs of society.

(2) Cultivate compound talents who meet market demand

In today's market, there is an increasing demand for compound talents with multiple abilities. Through narrative training, accounting students can effectively integrate knowledge across disciplines, which is essential for business students to deal with complex problems and make innovative decisions in the future workplace [8]. Research shows that narrative ability can help students build a body of knowledge with practical value, thereby enhancing their competitiveness in the workplace.

(3) Enhance students' employment competitiveness

The job market demands more and more general capabilities from job seekers. Business students' narrative skills can help them improve the necessary communication skills, problem-solving skills and teamwork skills in the workplace. These skills are not only beneficial to accounting students' academic performance, but also play a key role in the employment process [9]. Research shows that business students with narrative skills are better able to adapt to changing work environments in the workplace.

(4) Promote innovation in educational content and methods

With the continuous development of education, the innovation of narrative education model can provide new ideas and methods for business teaching. Studies have shown that narrative teaching method can effectively promote accounting students' understanding of complex subject knowledge and stimulate their interest in learning. Through this innovative approach, business education can be more closely related to the actual needs of society [10].

## 3. Current Status of Relevant Research

(1) Narrative ability and higher education

In recent years, Chinese scholars have paid more and more attention to narrative education. In particular, the application of narrative ability as an important cognitive tool in education and teaching has achieved certain research results. Li Meixia pointed out that narrative can not only improve accounting students' language expression ability [10], but also enhance their cognition of complex social issues and help accounting students form multiple ways of thinking. In addition, Guo Jing further explores the role of narrative in cultivating accounting students' critical thinking and creativity, and believes that narrative can effectively improve accounting students' thinking flexibility and innovative consciousness [11].

(2) The application of narrative skills in business education

In recent years, narrative-based pedagogy has gradually attracted scholarly attention in the field of business education, especially with regard to the cultivation of transferable skills. Nguyen and Walker demonstrate that narrative-centered teaching approaches can effectively enhance business students' critical thinking,

communication competence, and problem-solving ability by situating learning within authentic and meaningful contexts. Compared with traditional theory-driven instruction, narrative pedagogy enables students to actively construct knowledge through storytelling, case interpretation, and reflective dialogue. These findings provide strong empirical support for integrating narrative methods into accounting education, particularly in normal universities where professional training and educational functions coexist [12].

(3) Narrative ability development from an interdisciplinary perspective

The proposal of the new liberal arts concept has promoted the in-depth study of interdisciplinary education. In this context, narrative ability, as an interdisciplinary thinking tool, has gradually been introduced into the teaching of business education. Zhao and Huang point out that interdisciplinary curriculum design plays a critical role in cultivating students' integrative thinking and adaptive competencies, especially in applied disciplines. Narrative ability, as an inherently interdisciplinary cognitive tool, supports students in connecting disciplinary knowledge with real-world contexts and social meanings [13]. Li Juanjuan also believes that by combining narrative methods with business expertise, accounting students can enhance their creative and critical thinking, providing strong support for their future careers.

(4) The application of narrative ability in teacher education

As a training base for educational talents, the research on narrative ability in normal colleges and universities has gradually increased. Peng Hua pointed out that the introduction of narrative methods in teacher education can not only improve the language expression and instructional design capabilities of future teachers, but also help them improve their abilities in classroom management, student interaction, etc. In addition, Li Li mentioned that the application of narrative methods can enhance teachers' teaching reflection ability, thereby better promoting the improvement of educational quality.

(5) Domestic practice and experience in cultivating business students' narrative ability

In China, many teachers' colleges and business schools are gradually trying to integrate the cultivation of narrative ability into teaching practice. For example, Shandong University

Business School offers a special narrative writing course to help students improve their critical thinking and practical problem-solving skills. They use case analysis, role-play and other teaching methods to cultivate students' practical ability to apply narrative ability in complex business situations. Similar teaching reforms have been promoted in several business schools across the country, and have achieved remarkable results.

(6) Narrative and business ethics education

As an important part of business education, business ethics has received more and more attention in recent years. Narrative, as an effective means of ethics education, can help accounting students understand complex business ethics issues and improve their moral judgment and ethical awareness. Sun and Chen find that narrative-based instruction effectively enhances business students' ethical awareness and moral reasoning by encouraging them to reflect on values, responsibilities, and consequences embedded in business decisions [14]. By reviewing relevant domestic literature, it can be found that the cultivation of narrative ability has gradually attracted attention in the field of business education in China. Although the research started late, a number of studies have shown that narrative can not only improve accounting students' language expression ability and thinking ability, but also help accounting students better understand and apply business knowledge, especially in interdisciplinary integration and critical thinking cultivation. These studies provide a solid theoretical and practical foundation for the further advancement of this project.

#### **4. Specific Reform Content, Reform Goals, and Key Issues to be Addressed**

##### **4.1 Specific Reform Content**

(1) Curriculum system reform

Combine traditional business courses with the cultivation of narrative ability, and add "narratology and business case analysis" to courses such as management, organizational behavior, marketing and strategic management to improve accounting students' narrative skills. Integrate interdisciplinary knowledge into business courses, promote the integration of business with literature, sociology, psychology and other disciplines, and help accounting students understand and apply narrative from

multiple perspectives. Introduce project-driven and situational simulation teaching methods to combine narrative ability with actual business cases and simulation practices.

(2) Reform of the teaching model

Implement blended teaching (a combination of online and offline), so that accounting students can not only learn in the classroom, but also learn independently through online resources, strengthening their narrative skills.

Adopting innovative teaching models such as reversed classroom and case teaching allows accounting students to create narratives in the process of solving practical business problems, strengthening the combination of practice and theory.

(3) Reform of evaluation methods

Change the traditional examination and evaluation methods, and use more diverse evaluation methods such as case analysis, project display, and teamwork based on narrative ability. Design new evaluation standards, not only focus on knowledge mastery, but also pay attention to the evaluation of accounting students' narrative thinking, expression ability, and innovation ability.

(4) Faculty reform

Introduce teachers with interdisciplinary backgrounds, especially those with business practice experience and narratology research background, to improve teaching quality and practical guidance level. Regularly organize teacher training to enhance teachers' narrative teaching ability and curriculum innovation design ability.

(5) Reform of practical links

Through school-enterprise cooperation, business simulations, etc., let accounting students participate in real business projects, and improve narrative application ability through narrative practice in the project. Promote "case writing and display" as a practical link, and encourage accounting students to use narrative skills to create business stories and give speeches.

## 4.2 Reform Goals

(1) Enhance accounting students' storytelling skills

To enable business students to master basic narrative skills, including how to construct a plot, design characters, analyze the background of a story and its social and cultural impact. Develop accounting students' ability to use

narrative skills to express opinions, convey information, and shape brand perception in business situations.

(2) Enhance accounting students' interdisciplinary thinking skills

Through interdisciplinary curriculum design and practical activities, accounting students can use narrative skills to analyze business cases, understand complex business environments and interpersonal relationships. Train accounting students to integrate perspectives from multiple disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and culture into business narratives, enhancing their global perspective and diverse thinking.

(3) Foster accounting students' critical thinking and innovation skills

Help accounting students develop critical thinking in the narrative process, be able to identify implicit values and potential biases in the narrative, and come up with independent insights. Develop accounting students' ability to create innovative narratives, especially in the fields of business marketing, brand communication, etc., to create unique narrative methods and story structures.

(4) Developing practical skills and teamwork spirit

Through practical activities and team projects, accounting students can enhance their practical ability of business storytelling, so that they can apply narrative skills in real situations. Improve accounting students' teamwork and communication skills, especially in the process of narrative creation and display, accounting students can effectively cooperate and innovate collaboratively.

## 4.3 Key Issues to be Addressed

(1) Insufficient attention to narrative ability in business education

In the current business education, the cultivation of narrative ability is mostly ignored, and the curriculum system mostly focuses on theory and professional knowledge, while neglecting the cultivation of accounting students' practical ability and communication and expression ability.

Solution: Through curriculum reform, integrate narrative ability into the core content of business courses, set up relevant modules and courses, and design practical links.

(2) Accounting students lack the ability to integrate knowledge across disciplines.

Many business students lack the understanding

and application ability of other disciplines, especially in business narratives, they cannot integrate sociology, psychology, literature and other academic knowledge into narrative construction.

We can introduce interdisciplinary knowledge into the curriculum to develop accounting students' ability to understand and construct business narratives from a multidisciplinary perspective.

(3) The evaluation criteria for narrative ability are not clear

The traditional teaching evaluation model emphasizes the mastery of knowledge and the application of technology, but lacks the evaluation of accounting students' narrative ability, innovative thinking and critical analysis ability.

Solution: Establish a diverse evaluation system, comprehensively evaluate accounting students' narrative ability through project presentations, case studies, teamwork, etc., and focus on the depth and innovation of accounting students' thinking.

(4) Lack of a teaching model that is closely integrated with practice

The traditional teaching model places too much emphasis on theoretical explanation, and accounting students lack the opportunity to translate what they have learned into practical application, especially in the creation and presentation of business narratives.

Solution: Through hands-on activities such as school-enterprise collaboration, business simulations, and case writing, accounting students can apply narrative skills to actual business situations.

#### **4.4 Implementation Plan, Implementation Method, Specific Implementation Plan (Including Annual Progress) and Feasibility Analysis**

(1) Implementation plan

This research takes the construction of "new liberal arts" as the background and focuses on the cultivation of narrative ability of business students in normal colleges and universities. The implementation plan will follow the path of "top-level design - layered advancement - evaluation feedback - continuous optimization". The overall goal is to build a set of scientific and reasonable narrative ability training models through a three-year cycle, and form a generalizable teaching reform experience.

The implementation plan mainly includes the following four aspects: curriculum system construction, teaching method innovation, practice platform construction, and evaluation system and feedback mechanism, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Overall Framework of the Implementation Plan**

pattern	Main content
Curriculum system construction	Offer narrative theory courses, case analysis courses, and interdisciplinary courses; integrate narrative into core courses such as marketing and business ethics
Teaching method innovation	Case storytelling, role-playing, project-based learning (PBL), digital storytelling (VR/AR, etc.)
Practice platform construction	Establish a school-enterprise cooperation practice base; organize interdisciplinary narrative competitions; conduct business story lectures
Evaluation system and feedback	Establish an evaluation system of "process + outcome + multi-subject"; covering four dimensions of language, logic, innovation and cooperation

In order to ensure the operability of the scheme, this study will adopt the following implementation methods: top-level design and hierarchical implementation Combination, classroom teaching and extracurricular activities, online and offline blended teaching, and evaluation-driven and feedback adjustment, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Implementation Path and Method Matrix**

Path and method types	Implementation points
Top-level design + layered implementation	Unified development framework; stratified by grade (freshman foundation, sophomore case and interdisciplinary, junior practice and innovation)
Classroom teaching + extracurricular activities	Classroom: case storytelling, situation simulation; extracurricular: narrative writing competition, business story lecture
Online + offline combination	Online release of resources (MOOCs, case libraries); offline interactive teaching (seminars, role-playing)
Evaluation drive + feedback adjustment	Teacher evaluation + peer evaluation + self-reflection; dynamic feedback optimizes teaching plan

(3) Implementation plan (including annual progress) and feasibility analysis  
The planned implementation period of this

project is three years, divided into the preparation stage, the construction stage, and the promotion stage, as shown in Table 3. There have been research results on narrative education and interdisciplinary training at home and abroad, which provide solid theoretical support for this study. The concept of "new liberal arts" advocates interdisciplinary and humanistic literacy cultivation, which is highly consistent with the direction of this project. Normal colleges and universities have humanities advantages and rich teacher resources, which can provide interdisciplinary support for business narrative education. There are already a large number of case teaching traditions in business courses, which are naturally in line with narrative methods.

**Table 3. Implementation Plan**

annual	main task	Stage results
First Year	Literature research, pilot course development, preliminary evaluation system	The first draft of the "Curriculum Framework", 2 pilot courses, and 10 case libraries
second year	Extended curriculum, interdisciplinary collaboration, digital storytelling	Narrative ability development related courses, interdisciplinary courses
third year	Achievement summary, model solidification, promotion and application	Relevant papers, promotion and application

### 5. Conclusion

This study examines the cultivation of narrative ability among business students in normal universities within the framework of the New Liberal Arts, taking accounting majors as a representative case. By systematically analyzing the theoretical significance, practical value, and current challenges of narrative ability development, the paper argues that narrative competence is not only an essential form of expressive skill but also a critical mode of thinking that supports interdisciplinary integration, critical reflection, and practical problem-solving in business education. Based on a review of existing research and educational practice, this study identifies key constraints in current business education, including insufficient curricular attention to narrative ability, limited interdisciplinary integration, unclear evaluation standards, and weak connections between teaching and practice. In response, a comprehensive teaching

reform framework is proposed, encompassing curriculum system optimization, innovative teaching models, diversified evaluation mechanisms, faculty development, and practice-oriented platforms.

The proposed pathways aim to enhance students' storytelling skills, interdisciplinary thinking, critical and innovative capacities, as well as teamwork and practical application abilities. Overall, this study provides a structured and feasible model for narrative ability cultivation in normal universities, offering both theoretical enrichment and practical guidance for advancing business education reform under the New Liberal Arts paradigm. Future research may further validate the effectiveness of this model through empirical investigation and longitudinal assessment.

### Acknowledgments

This work is supported by Lingnan Normal University's 2025 University-level Educational Teaching Research and Reform Funding Project "Research on the Path and Mode of Narrative Ability Cultivation for Business Students in Normal Universities from the Perspective of New Liberal Arts".

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