

Curriculum Management Strategies for Newly Recruited to Develop Students Adaptability skills at Sichuan University of Culture and Arts, China

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Abstract

This study aimed to: 1) study the conceptual frameworks of Curriculum Management and Adaptability Skills; 2) examine the current conditions of Curriculum Management and Adaptability Skills at Sichuan University of Culture and Arts, China; and 3) develop Curriculum Management Strategies to improve newly recruited students' adaptability skills at Sichuan University of Culture and Arts, China.

A multiphase mixed methods research design was employed. The participants consisted of 280 newly recruited undergraduate students selected by simple random sampling from a population of 932 students, together with 18 academic administrators and faculty leaders selected through purposive sampling. Research instruments included an evaluation form, a questionnaire, a focus group discussion guide, and a strategy evaluation form. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. SWOT analysis and the TOWS Matrix were used as strategic synthesis tools to support strategy development, while qualitative data from expert comments and focus group discussion were analyzed using content analysis. The findings revealed that: 1) the conceptual framework consisted of three Curriculum Management dimensions—Curriculum Development, Teaching, and Evaluation—and five Adaptability Skills—Cognitive Flexibility, Change Management, Problem Solving, Growth Mindset, and Teamwork; 2) the current conditions of the three Curriculum Management dimensions and five Adaptability Skills were at a moderate level, indicating the need for integrated improvement across curriculum management

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and adaptability development; and 3) three Curriculum Management Strategies were developed and refined through strategic synthesis and expert consultation: Reform Evaluation, Redesign University Curriculum, and Strengthen Teaching. Expert evaluation indicated that all three strategies were rated at a high level of suitability and feasibility. The findings provide practical guidance for improving curriculum management and enhancing newly recruited students' adaptability skills in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Curriculum Management, Adaptability Skills, Management Strategies, Higher Education, TOWS Matrix

Introduction

Higher education has increasingly emphasized the development of students' comprehensive competencies and their ability to respond to changing academic and social environments. In this context, curriculum management plays an important role in coordinating curriculum development, teaching, and evaluation to ensure educational quality and responsiveness. Jovanović and Dimitrijević (2023) emphasized the importance of monitoring, evaluation, and coordination in higher education curriculum management, while Kusmawan (2025) highlighted the need for competency-oriented and adaptive curriculum design to respond to emerging educational demands. Similarly, Derin and Küçükoğlu (2025) and Bari (2025) emphasized the importance of curriculum leadership, responsiveness, and continuous curriculum improvement in changing higher education environments.

Adaptability is particularly important for newly recruited university students because they are required to adjust to new academic expectations, learning environments, teaching approaches, and forms of assessment. Recent research has increasingly recognized adaptability as a multidimensional competency related to students' learning and academic preparedness. Aporbo (2024) found that active learning environments can support the development of students' adaptability skills, while Rashid et al. (2024) highlighted the relationships among students' attitudes, digital skills, and adaptability in learning. Sangarwut and Polsuwan (2025) also demonstrated the importance of developing problem-solving and adaptability skills through structured

educational activities. These findings suggest that adaptability should be considered not only as an individual student characteristic but also as an important consideration in curriculum design and implementation.

Sichuan University of Culture and Arts is characterized by cultural, artistic, and practice-oriented undergraduate programs. Students are required to participate in diverse learning modes, including studio-based instruction, project-based learning, and performance-oriented assessment. Newly recruited students enter the university with diverse educational backgrounds and learning characteristics, which creates challenges for both student adaptation and curriculum management. Therefore, the university provides an appropriate context for examining how curriculum management can support the development of newly recruited students' adaptability skills.

Although previous studies have examined curriculum management and adaptability skills in higher education, these areas have often been investigated separately. Recent curriculum-management research has focused on governance, curriculum responsiveness, leadership, and quality improvement, whereas adaptability research has focused mainly on students' learning, engagement, and individual competencies. Research integrating curriculum management, students' adaptability skills, and strategic analytical approaches remains comparatively limited, particularly in the context of cultural and art universities. Therefore, this study integrates Curriculum Management and Adaptability Skills to examine the current conditions of curriculum management and students' adaptability and to provide an empirical basis for developing Curriculum Management Strategies for newly recruited students at Sichuan University of Culture and Arts, China.

Research Objectives

1. To study conceptual frameworks of Curriculum Management and Adaptability skills.
2. To examine the current conditions of Curriculum Management and Adaptability Skills at Sichuan University of Culture and Arts, China.

3. To develop Curriculum Management Strategies to improve newly recruited students' adaptability skills at Sichuan University of Culture and Arts, China.

Expected Benefits of the Research

This study is expected to provide benefits for newly recruited students, teachers, and the university. For newly recruited students, the proposed curriculum management strategies may support their adaptation to the university learning environment and contribute to the development of their adaptability skills. For teachers, the findings may provide guidance for understanding students' adaptability needs and adjusting teaching practices accordingly. For the university, the study provides practical guidance for improving curriculum development, teaching, and evaluation, and for strengthening curriculum management mechanisms that support newly recruited students' successful transition to university learning.

Research Methods

1. Population and Sample

The population consisted of 932 newly recruited undergraduate students at Sichuan University of Culture and Arts. The university's official newly recruited student registration list was used as the sampling frame. The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1973) as follows: $n = N / [1 + N(e^2)]$

where n represents the sample size, N represents the population size, and e represents the acceptable sampling error. With a population of 932 students and an error level of 0.05: $n = 932 / [1 + 932(0.05^2)] = 279.88 \approx 280$

Therefore, 280 newly recruited undergraduate students were selected using simple random sampling. In addition, 18 academic administrators and faculty leaders were selected through purposive sampling to provide managerial perspectives for strategic analysis and strategy development. Thus, a total of 298 respondents participated in the questionnaire survey.

2. Research Instruments

The research instruments included an expert evaluation form, a questionnaire, a focus group discussion guide, and a strategy evaluation form. The expert evaluation form was used to examine the conceptual frameworks of Curriculum Management and Adaptability Skills. The questionnaire included items concerning the current and desirable conditions of Curriculum Management based on Adaptability Skills, together with open-ended questions. For the present article, the current-condition responses were used to address the second research objective. The focus group discussion guide was used to review and refine the proposed curriculum management strategies, while the strategy evaluation form was used to assess the suitability and feasibility of the proposed strategies.

Three qualified experts evaluated the conceptual frameworks using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). The experts rated each component as Agree (+1), Not Sure (0), or Disagree (-1). All three experts agreed with each of the three Curriculum Management components and the five Adaptability Skills components, resulting in an IOC value of 1.00 for each component. An IOC value of 0.50 or above is generally considered acceptable for content validity; therefore, the results indicated satisfactory content validity of the conceptual frameworks (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977).

The internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire was examined using Cronbach's alpha. Based on the 298 completed questionnaires, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.969 for the current-condition scale and 0.956 for the desirable-condition scale. Both values exceeded the commonly accepted criterion of 0.70, indicating high internal consistency reliability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

3. Data Collection and Analysis

After obtaining permission for data collection, the questionnaire was distributed to the selected respondents through Wen juanxing, an online questionnaire platform widely used in China. A total of 298 valid responses were obtained, including responses from 280 newly recruited undergraduate students and 18 academic administrators and faculty leaders.

Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation to examine the current conditions of Curriculum Management and

Adaptability Skills. SWOT analysis was used as a strategic synthesis framework to organize the key curriculum-management issues, while the TOWS Matrix was applied to support the formulation of Curriculum Management Strategies. Qualitative data from open-ended responses, expert comments, and the focus group discussion were analyzed using content analysis. A focus group consisting of seven experts reviewed the proposed strategies and provided recommendations for improving their clarity, feasibility, structural coherence, and contextual relevance. The qualitative findings were subsequently used to revise and finalize the proposed Curriculum Management Strategies.

Conceptual Framework

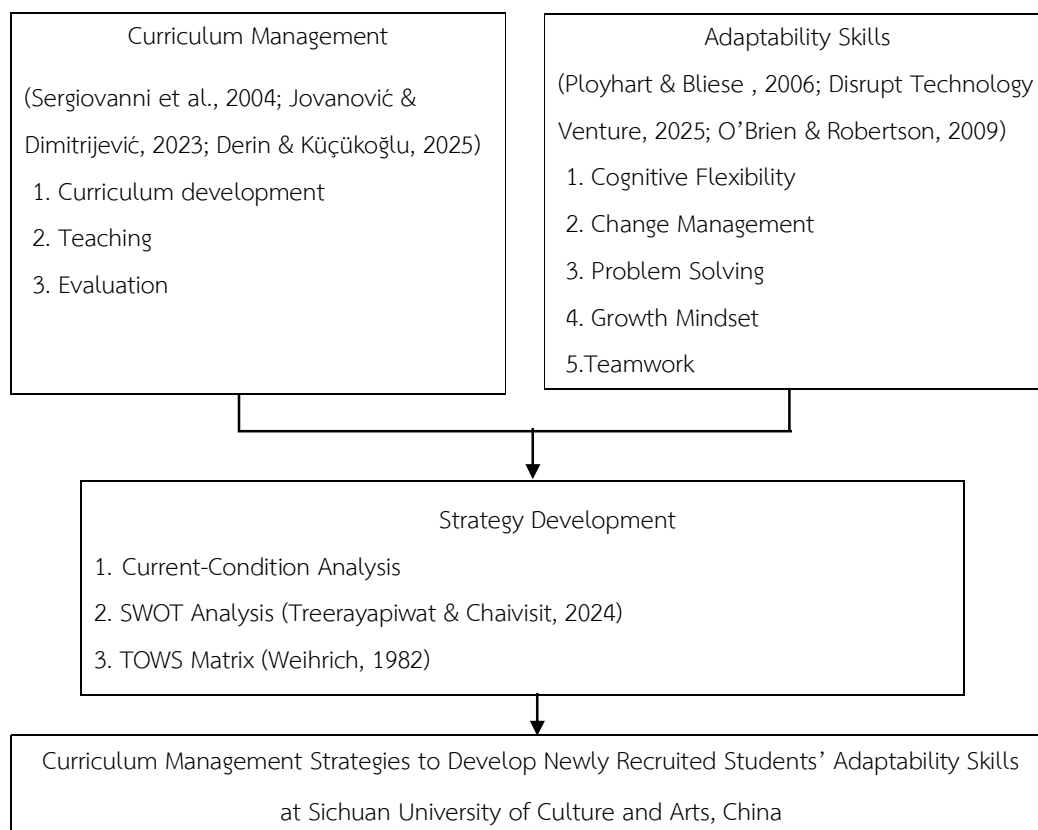


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Research Results

Objective 1: To study conceptual frameworks of Curriculum Management and Adaptability skills.

Table 1 Results of Conceptual Frameworks Evaluation by Experts

Components	Experts' Evaluation			Percent	Comments or Suggestions
	(n = 3)				
	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree		
Curriculum Management					
1. Curriculum Development	3			100	
2. Teaching	3			100	
3. Evaluation	3			100	
Adaptability Skills					
1. Cognitive Flexibility	3			100	
2. Change Management	3			100	
3. Problem Solving	3			100	
4. Growth Mindset	3			100	
5. Teamwork	3			100	

As shown in Table 1, all three experts agreed with the three components of Curriculum Management—Curriculum Development, Teaching, and Evaluation—and the five components of Adaptability Skills—Cognitive Flexibility, Change Management, Problem Solving, Growth Mindset, and Teamwork. Each component obtained an IOC value of 1.00, indicating a high level of content congruence. The results confirmed that the conceptual frameworks were appropriate for guiding the subsequent current-condition analysis, strategic synthesis, and strategy development.

Objective 2: To examine the current conditions of Curriculum Management and Adaptability Skills at Sichuan University of Culture and Arts, China.

Table 2 Current Conditions of Curriculum Management and Adaptability Skills

Dimension	Mean	SD	Level
Curriculum Management			
Curriculum Development	3.37	0.90	Moderate
Teaching	3.29	0.99	Moderate
Evaluation	3.40	0.91	Moderate
Adaptability Skills			
Cognitive Flexibility	3.38	0.86	Moderate
Change Management	3.34	0.86	Moderate
Problem Solving	3.36	0.86	Moderate
Growth Mindset	3.37	0.84	Moderate
Teamwork	3.36	0.84	Moderate

As shown in Table 2, the current conditions of Curriculum Management were at a moderate level across all three dimensions. Evaluation obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.91$), followed by Curriculum Development ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.90$), while Teaching obtained the lowest mean ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.99$).

Regarding Adaptability Skills, all five dimensions were also at a moderate level. Cognitive Flexibility obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.86$), followed by Growth Mindset ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.84$), Problem Solving ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.86$), Teamwork ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.84$), and Change Management ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.86$). The relatively small differences among the mean scores indicate that improvement should address the five adaptability skills in an integrated manner.

The current-condition findings were subsequently synthesized with qualitative evidence and expert input using SWOT analysis as a strategic framework. The identified strategic considerations were further organized through the TOWS Matrix to support the formulation of preliminary Curriculum Management Strategies. These strategies were then reviewed and refined through expert evaluation and focus group discussion.

Objective 3: To develop Curriculum Management Strategies to improve newly recruited students' adaptability skills at Sichuan University of Culture and Arts, China

Table 3 Summary of Proposed Management Strategies

Strategies and Sub strategies	Suitability Mean (SD)	Level	Feasibility Mean (SD)	Level
Strategy 1: Reform Evaluation	4.12 (0.33)	High	4.04(0.46)	High
Strategy 2: Redesign University Curriculum	4.42(0.70)	High	4.32 (0.67)	High
Strategy 3: Strengthen Teaching	4.48(0.52)	High	4.48(0.52)	High

As shown in Table 3, all three proposed Curriculum Management Strategies were evaluated at a high level in terms of both suitability and feasibility. Strategy 3, Strengthen Teaching, obtained the highest mean scores for both suitability ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.52$) and feasibility ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.52$). Strategy 2, Redesign University Curriculum, received a suitability mean of 4.42 ($SD = 0.70$) and a feasibility mean of 4.32 ($SD = 0.67$). Strategy 1, Reform Evaluation, received a suitability mean of 4.12 ($SD = 0.33$) and a feasibility mean of 4.04 ($SD = 0.46$). These results indicate that all three strategies were considered appropriate and feasible for implementation.

Qualitative Results from the Focus Group Discussion

The content analysis of the focus group discussion showed that the seven experts generally supported the proposed Curriculum Management Strategies and provided several recommendations for refinement. The major recommendations included clarifying the roles and responsibilities of curriculum and evaluation committees; including supporting staff in technology-related training; clarifying the application of internationalized learning experiences to appropriate subjects; formally incorporating Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) into the teaching strategies; and explicitly including international teachers in professional development activities. The feasible recommendations were incorporated into the final Curriculum Management Strategies.

The three strategies with their corresponding substrategies and core procedures are summarized as follows:

Strategy 1: Reform Evaluation consists of two substrategies: 1) Create evaluation criteria for the five adaptability skills; and 2) Promote integrated assessment tools. Core procedures include appointing an evaluation committee with parent representatives, developing evaluation manuals and guidelines, providing training for teachers and supporting staff on technology-enhanced assessment, implementing integrated assessment through questionnaires, reflective journals, e-portfolios, peer assessment, and teacher assessment, and continuously monitoring and improving the evaluation system. These procedures aim to establish a comprehensive evaluation system that supports the development of newly recruited students' adaptability skills.

Strategy 2: Redesign University Curriculum consists of two substrategies: 1) Integrate adaptability as learning outcomes; and 2) Reform the selection of learning experiences. Core procedures include establishing a curriculum committee with parent representatives, providing technology-enhanced curriculum development training, integrating the five adaptability skills into curriculum learning outcomes, redesigning learning experiences based on authentic and interdisciplinary contexts, and monitoring curriculum implementation through expert review and student feedback. These procedures are intended to strengthen the integration of adaptability skills into curriculum development and improve students' learning experiences.

Strategy 3: Strengthen Teaching consists of two substrategies: 1) Develop learning activities that cultivate adaptability skills; and 2) Strengthen varied teaching approaches. Core procedures include designing adaptability-focused learning activities, establishing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), implementing mentoring programmes, applying experiential, collaborative, problem-based, and project-based learning approaches, engaging community stakeholders, providing professional development for both Chinese and international teachers, and continuously monitoring and improving teaching practices. These procedures are designed to enhance newly recruited students' adaptability through effective teaching and continuous instructional improvement.

Overall, the three proposed strategies are closely interconnected and complement one another in improving curriculum management. Reforming evaluation provides evidence for continuous curriculum improvement, curriculum redesign ensures that adaptability skills are systematically embedded into learning outcomes and learning experiences, and strengthened teaching practices facilitate the effective implementation of these curriculum changes. Together, these strategies establish a comprehensive curriculum management framework that supports newly recruited students in adapting successfully to university learning and promotes continuous improvement in educational quality.

Research Discussion

1. Discussion of the Conceptual Frameworks of Curriculum Management and Adaptability Skills

The first research objective was to study the conceptual frameworks of Curriculum Management and Adaptability Skills. The findings identified three components of Curriculum Management—Curriculum Development, Teaching, and Evaluation—and five components of Adaptability Skills—Cognitive Flexibility, Change Management, Problem Solving, Growth Mindset, and Teamwork. All components received unanimous agreement from the three experts, confirming their appropriateness for the study.

These findings indicate that effective curriculum management should not be limited to curriculum design alone but should integrate curriculum development, teaching implementation, and evaluation as interconnected processes. This view is consistent with Derin and Küçükoğlu (2025), who emphasized the strategic role of higher education lecturers in curriculum design, evaluation, and revision under changing educational conditions. The inclusion of adaptability skills in the conceptual framework is also supported by recent research showing that adaptability can be strengthened through educational and learning experiences. Aporbo (2024), for example, found a significant relationship between active learning and students' adaptability skills.

2. Discussion of the Current Conditions of Curriculum Management and Adaptability Skills

The second research objective was to examine the current conditions of Curriculum Management and Adaptability Skills at Sichuan University of Culture and Arts, China. The findings showed that Curriculum Development, Teaching, and Evaluation were all at a moderate level. Evaluation obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.91$), followed by Curriculum Development ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.90$), while Teaching obtained the lowest mean ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.99$). However, all three dimensions remained within the same moderate level, suggesting that curriculum-management improvement should address curriculum development, teaching, and evaluation as interconnected processes rather than treating one dimension as a definitive strength or weakness.

Regarding Adaptability Skills, all five dimensions were also at a moderate level. Cognitive Flexibility obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.86$), followed by Growth Mindset ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.84$), Problem Solving ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.86$), Teamwork ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.84$), and Change Management ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.86$). The relatively small differences among these mean scores indicate that the five Adaptability Skills should be developed collectively rather than treated as strongly differentiated priority areas. This interpretation is consistent with Aporbo (2024), who demonstrated that active learning experiences can support the development of students' adaptability skills.

Taken together, the findings suggest that improving newly recruited students' adaptability requires coordinated attention to Curriculum Development, Teaching, and Evaluation. The current-condition findings therefore provided an empirical basis for the subsequent strategic synthesis and development of Curriculum Management Strategies.

3. Discussion of the Development of Curriculum Management Strategies

The third research objective was to develop Curriculum Management Strategies to improve newly recruited students' adaptability skills. Based on the current-condition analysis, SWOT-based strategic synthesis, and the TOWS Matrix, three strategies were developed: (1) Reform Evaluation, (2) Redesign University Curriculum, and (3) Strengthen Teaching. The final framework consisted of three strategies, six

substrategies, and twenty-six implementation procedures. All three strategies were evaluated by experts at a high level of suitability and feasibility.

The three strategies address the interconnected dimensions of Curriculum Management identified in the conceptual framework. Reform Evaluation focuses on establishing adaptability-oriented evaluation criteria and integrated assessment tools. Redesign University Curriculum integrates Adaptability Skills into learning outcomes and learning experiences. Strengthen Teaching emphasizes adaptability-oriented learning activities, diversified teaching approaches, Professional Learning Communities, mentoring, and professional development. Rather than interpreting one Curriculum Management dimension as a definitive strength or weakness, the strategy framework promotes coordinated improvement across curriculum development, teaching, and evaluation.

This strategic direction is supported by recent curriculum-management research. Bari (2025) emphasized that successful curriculum change in higher education requires structured change management, stakeholder engagement, collaboration, and continuous communication. Similarly, Derin and Küçükoğlu (2025) highlighted the strategic roles of academic staff in curriculum design, evaluation, and revision under changing higher education conditions. The emphasis placed in the present study on learning activities, collaborative learning, and adaptability-oriented curriculum experiences is also consistent with Sangarwut and Polsuwan (2025), whose training curriculum incorporating collaborative and problem-solving activities resulted in improvements in participants' problem-solving and adaptability skills. These findings support the practical relevance of integrating curriculum redesign, teaching improvement, and evaluation reform rather than treating them as isolated interventions.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that improving newly recruited students' adaptability skills requires coordinated action across curriculum development, teaching, and evaluation. The study therefore extends beyond identifying individual student weaknesses by linking students' adaptability needs with institutional curriculum-management practices and strategic responses. The combination of current-condition analysis, SWOT-based strategic synthesis, the TOWS Matrix, and expert review enabled

the proposed strategies to be developed systematically and refined for the specific context of Sichuan University of Culture and Arts.

New Knowledge

This study contributes a context-specific Curriculum Management strategic framework for developing newly recruited students' adaptability skills at Sichuan University of Culture and Arts, China. The framework was systematically developed from the current-condition analysis, SWOT-based strategic synthesis, TOWS Matrix, focus group discussion, and expert evaluation. It integrates Curriculum Development, Teaching, and Evaluation with five Adaptability Skills: Cognitive Flexibility, Change Management, Problem Solving, Growth Mindset, and Teamwork. The final framework consists of three interconnected Curriculum Management Strategies: (1) Reform Evaluation, (2) Redesign University Curriculum, and (3) Strengthen Teaching, comprising six substrategies and twenty-six implementation procedures. Rather than addressing students' adaptability as an isolated individual issue, the framework links adaptability development with institutional curriculum-management practices and provides a systematic pathway for curriculum improvement.

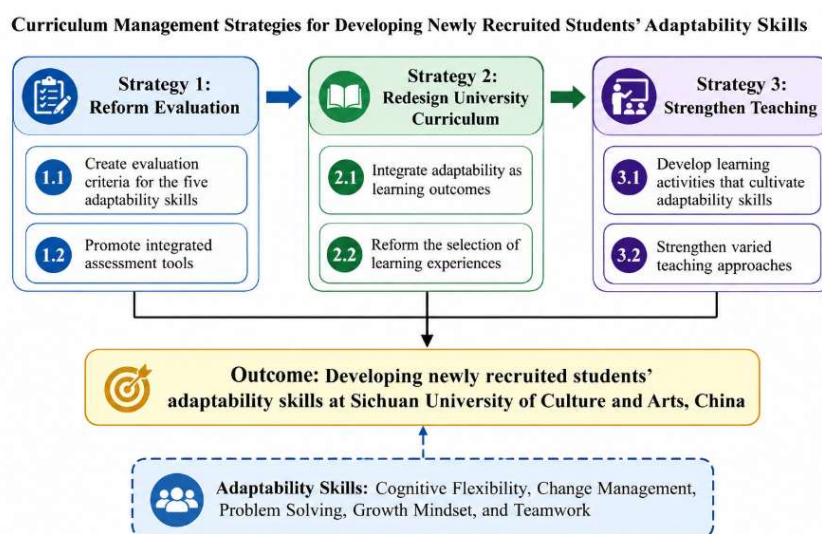


Figure 2 Curriculum Management Strategies for Developing Newly Recruited Students' Adaptability Skills

As illustrated in Figure 2, Strategy 1, Reform Evaluation, strengthens adaptability-oriented evaluation by establishing evaluation criteria for the five Adaptability Skills and promoting integrated assessment tools. Strategy 2, Redesign University Curriculum, integrates Adaptability Skills into learning outcomes and redesigns learning experiences to strengthen adaptability-oriented curriculum development. Strategy 3, Strengthen Teaching, develops adaptability-oriented learning activities and diversified teaching approaches. Together, the three strategies form an integrated Curriculum Management framework that connects Curriculum Development, Teaching, and Evaluation with five Adaptability Skills: Cognitive Flexibility, Change Management, Problem Solving, Growth Mindset, and Teamwork.

Research Suggestions

1. Policy Suggestions

It is recommended that higher education authorities promote curriculum management policies that emphasize the development of students' adaptability skills. Universities should establish curriculum quality standards that integrate adaptability skills into curriculum development, teaching, and evaluation. In addition, education authorities should encourage curriculum innovation, provide professional development opportunities for teachers, and strengthen quality assurance mechanisms to support the continuous improvement of curriculum management in higher education institutions.

2. Practical Suggestions

It is recommended that Sichuan University of Culture and Arts prioritize the implementation of the three Curriculum Management Strategies proposed in this study: Reform Evaluation, Redesign University Curriculum, and Strengthen Teaching. The university should establish appropriate curriculum and evaluation committees to coordinate curriculum development, teaching improvement, and evaluation reform based on students' adaptability skills. Teachers should integrate adaptability skills into learning outcomes, design adaptability-oriented learning activities, and apply diversified teaching approaches to develop students' Cognitive Flexibility, Change Management,

Problem Solving, Growth Mindset, and Teamwork. Continuous monitoring, evaluation, and curriculum improvement should also be conducted to support the effective implementation and refinement of the proposed strategies.

3. Suggestions for Future Research

3.1 Future studies should examine the effectiveness of the proposed Curriculum Management Strategies after their implementation. Longitudinal research is recommended to investigate changes in newly recruited students' adaptability skills over time.

3.2 Future research should extend the study to universities with different institutional characteristics and academic disciplines in order to examine the applicability of the proposed strategies in different higher education contexts.

3.3 Future studies may investigate additional factors related to students' adaptability, such as digital learning competence and psychological resilience, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of newly recruited students' adaptation to higher education.

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