

Exploration and Research on the Recognition and Transformation of Learning Achievements in the Context of Higher Vocational College Enrollment Expansion

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Abstract: The recognition and transformation of learning outcomes is a key step in building a lifelong learning pathway to meet the personalized and diverse learning and development needs of individuals. In response to the problems of incomplete systems, complex processes, and inadequate quality monitoring in the recognition and conversion of learning outcomes at Guangdong Polytechnic of Science and Technology, suggestions are proposed to optimize management methods, standardize the process of recognition and conversion of learning outcomes, build an information platform for recognition and conversion of learning outcomes, and rely on vocational education groups to continuously standardize and orderly carry out recognition and conversion of learning outcomes.

Keywords: Learning outcomes; Credit recognition and conversion; Information platform; Course credits; Quality monitoring

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1. Introduction

In this new era, the world is in a wave of rapid change, with new situations and problems emerging one after another, and the updating and replacement of knowledge becoming increasingly rapid. To adapt to this ever-changing and constantly evolving objective world, individuals must transform learning from a single pursuit of knowledge to a deeply ingrained way of life and strive to achieve lifelong learning. Lifelong learning not only involves school education or specific training activities, but also encompasses various stages and forms of formal and informal learning in daily life. Lifelong learning has become a way for members of society to cope with changes in the external world and an uncertain future ^[1]. The Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China clearly pointed out the need to actively build an education system that serves lifelong learning for all, and ensure that everyone enjoys opportunities for lifelong learning, which has pointed out the future development direction for education reform in the new era. The “Modernization of

Education in China 2035” aims to establish a modern education system that serves lifelong learning for all citizens as its primary development goal. Realizing the connection and mutual recognition of different types of learning outcomes is not only an external incentive to promote lifelong learning for all, but also a key to completing this strategic task ^[2]. In the context of lifelong learning, the certification system for learning outcomes has become a bridge and channel connecting different types of education ^[3]. The Implementation Plan for National Vocational Education Reform released in 2019 provides support and guarantees for the recognition, accumulation, and transformation of learning outcomes from the policy and institutional levels ^[4]. At present, Guangdong, Jiangsu, Shandong, and other provinces have issued implementation opinions on credit recognition and conversion, encouraging universities within their provinces to actively explore mechanisms, standards, scope, processes, etc. for recognizing and converting learning outcomes. However, from the current theoretical and practical research, there are still problems such as inconsistent standards, incomplete mechanisms, narrow scope, and complex processes for identifying and converting learning outcomes.

This article takes Guangdong Polytechnic of Science and Technology as an example to carefully sort out and analyze the shortcomings in the recognition and conversion of learning outcomes: the system for recognition and conversion of learning outcomes is not sound, the recognition process is unclear, the recognition procedures are complex, and the quality monitoring is not in place. Targeted suggestions for recognition and conversion of learning outcomes are proposed, including optimizing the management methods for recognition and conversion, streamlining the process, building an information platform, and establishing a quality monitoring mechanism to help the school’s recognition and conversion of learning outcomes operate in an orderly and healthy manner.

2. Explanation of learning achievements

2.1. Learning outcomes

The concept of learning outcomes originated in 1979, when Eisner defined it as the result of participating in teaching activities in some form, a description of a learning state or learning performance, that is, “learning outcomes are the state that students ultimately achieve after participating in some form of activity” ^[5]. Mary Catharine Lennon, a PhD student at the University of Toronto, believes that clear learning outcomes are a clear statement of what learners know and can do at the end of a learning project, accompanied by appropriate assessment methods, which can provide a transparent way to understand students’ learning situations. It is a means of understanding, demonstrating, and evaluating the quality of education ^[6]. Global scholars have reached a basic consensus on the definition of learning outcomes, which refers to statements about what learners should know, understand, and be able to do after completing a learning process ^[7].

2.2. Types of learning outcomes

The content of learning outcomes is extensive and comes from various learning experiences of learners, including a certain level of knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired by students after participating in a specific series of school learning, as well as the results of all learning activities and various experiences that occur after learners enter society.

The first category is the academic learning outcomes in the formal education system. Formal education generally refers to school education, which is purposeful, planned, and organized education provided to students by specialized teaching personnel in fixed institutions or places. The learning outcomes are presented in the form of graduation certificates or credits.

The second type is non-degree training and learning outcomes in non-formal education systems. Non-formal

education refers to the collective term for educational and teaching activities conducted outside of organized educational institutions. It is usually a planned learning activity with clear learning objectives and targets, such as various job training, continuing education, etc. The learning outcomes are expressed through training certificates or qualification certificates.

The third type is the indefinite learning outcomes of the informal education system. Non-formal education is different from the two types of education mentioned above. It does not have specific learning time, learning objectives, or learning guidance, and is mostly a casual learning that accompanies learners' lives and work. The results of environments such as workplaces, libraries, and conversations are manifested in the form of experience, abilities, etc.

3. Current situation and existing problems of recognition and transformation of learning outcomes

3.1. Current situation of recognition and transformation of learning outcomes

Guangdong Polytechnic of Science and Technology (hereinafter referred to as "Gdit") has formulated the "Implementation Management Measures for Recognition and Conversion of Learning Achievements of Guangdong Polytechnic of Science and Technology," "Guangdong Lifelong Education Self Reliance Framework Level Standards," and "Overall Plan for Credit System Reform of Guangdong Polytechnic of Science and Technology" in accordance with the spirit of the "Implementation Opinions on Recognition and Conversion of Higher Education Credits of Guangdong Provincial Department of Education."

This management method consists of four chapters and 22 articles. Chapter 1, General Provisions, elaborates on the general requirements for the recognition and conversion of learning outcomes; for example, the courses for recognition and conversion of learning outcomes must be elective courses in the talent cultivation plan; Applicable to students enrolled in Guangzhou Academy of Sciences; The proportion of credits recognized and converted shall not exceed 50% of the total credits of the relevant major graduation; The course is the smallest unit for credit recognition and conversion, and can only be used for overall credit recognition at once. Chapter 2 provides a clear explanation of the scope, recognition, and conversion requirements for learning outcomes, including credit recognition and conversion requirements for eight types of learning outcomes: equivalent or higher education, lower-level education, higher education self-study examination courses, online courses, vocational qualification certificates, non-vocational qualification certificates, training certificates, and performance achievements. Chapter 3 explains the process of credit recognition and conversion: student application–initial review by the secondary college–review by the management department (academic affairs department)–public announcement–completion of credit recognition and conversion–credit counting by the teaching staff. Chapter 4 provides some supplementary explanations on credit recognition and conversion in the appendix.

3.2. Problems in the recognition and transformation of learning outcomes

Currently, the recognition and conversion of learning outcomes at Gdit has been carried out for many years, and it has been running smoothly and orderly. However, in the process of recognizing and transforming learning outcomes, some problems have also been found: the system for recognizing and transforming learning outcomes is incomplete, the process for recognizing and transforming learning outcomes is complex, and the quality monitoring of recognizing and transforming learning outcomes is not in place. These problems are not conducive to students' enthusiasm for obtaining and transforming learning outcomes, to meeting students' personalized and diversified learning needs, and to the integration and development of various academic and non-academic education, thus affecting the progress of

recognizing and transforming learning outcomes. Therefore, it is necessary to carefully sort out the shortcomings of school learning outcomes recognition and transformation work, and find practical and feasible solutions.

4. Thoughts on the recognition and conversion of learning achievements

In order to standardize and orderly carry out the recognition and conversion of learning achievements in Gdit, based on in-depth study of the “Implementation Plan for National Vocational Education Reform,” “Implementation Opinions of Guangdong Provincial Department of Education on Higher Education Credit Recognition and Conversion,” “Guangdong Lifelong Education Qualification Framework Level Standards,” and other documents, combined with the “Implementation Management Measures for Recognition and Conversion of Learning Achievements in Guangdong Polytechnic of Science and Technology” and the actual operation of school learning achievement recognition and conversion work, four suggestions are proposed.

4.1. Optimizing management methods, establishing organizational structure, and clarifying functional division of labor

Based on the actual situation of the recognition and conversion of learning achievements in the past work of Gdit, carefully sort out the “Implementation and Management Measures for Recognition and Conversion of Learning Achievements of Gdit” document, optimize the implementation and management measures for recognition and conversion of learning achievements, clarify the recognition and conversion standards, and effectively promote the standardized and orderly implementation of recognition and conversion of learning achievements. Firstly, establish a leadership organization for recognition and conversion of learning achievements, composed of school leaders in charge, the academic affairs department, the quality office, and other relevant personnel, to comprehensively lead and coordinate all aspects of recognition and conversion of learning achievements. Secondly, establish a structure for the recognition and conversion of learning outcomes, with the school’s academic affairs department responsible for promoting and publishing the recognition and conversion of learning outcomes, handling business, reviewing and certifying materials, and composed of professional experts, teaching management personnel, and frontline teaching staff. Again, establish a supervisory agency, with the school quality office responsible for supervising and inspecting the standardization and quality of the implementation of the recognition and transformation of learning outcomes.

4.2. Standardizing the process of recognizing and converting learning outcomes

The process of recognition and conversion of learning outcomes at Gdit is as follows: student application (academic system)–review by the secondary college–submission of review results to the academic affairs department–review by the academic affairs department–public announcement–submission of review materials to the teaching staff–credit counting. A standardized process is a key step in the recognition and conversion of learning outcomes. Therefore, firstly, it is necessary to provide strengthened training on the recognition and conversion standards (recognition standards, conversion standards) and processes for management personnel, frontline teachers, etc. involved in the recognition and conversion of learning outcomes, so that they are familiar with the standards and processes. Secondly, it is necessary to promote the standards and processes for recognizing and converting learning outcomes within the school, so that students know what kind of learning outcomes can be recognized and converted, how to recognize and convert learning outcomes, stimulate students’ interest in self-directed learning, personalized development, and lifelong learning, enhance students’ comprehensive literacy, and help the school develop with high quality.

4.3. Building an information platform for learning achievement recognition and conversion

The current process of recognition and conversion of learning outcomes at Gdit adopts a mixed online and offline recognition process. During the implementation of recognition and conversion of learning outcomes, it was found that the process is cumbersome and the recognition and conversion time is relatively long. In order to effectively implement the recognition and conversion of learning outcomes, the school promotes the use of “knowledge, skills, and abilities” as a universal currency to achieve substantial equivalence between learning outcomes and course credit conversion. Experts in various fields comprehensively examine the knowledge, skills, and abilities reflected in different types of learning outcomes within their respective fields. The course team decomposes and refines the course objectives in three dimensions: knowledge, skills, and abilities, and compiles specific measurable behavioral performance item by item. By comparative analysis, the course credits that can be converted from learning outcomes are obtained, achieving substantial equivalence. Develop a platform for “course score replacement and credit recognition,” establish a learning achievement library, credit recognition library, and course score library, store students’ learning achievements in the learning achievement library (personal lifelong learning file), apply for credit conversion of learning achievements on the platform, and after passing the review process, enter the score library, and then enter the learning achievement library to achieve course scores and credits recognized on the transcript display. In this way, on the one hand, it can make the recognition and conversion of learning outcomes more convenient, effective, and fair; on the other hand, the establishment of an information platform for the recognition and conversion of learning outcomes can make the information on learning outcomes recognition and conversion more transparent, facilitate supervision, and provide strong support for the development of learning outcomes recognition and conversion work.

4.4. Relying on Zhuhai Vocational Education Group to carry out standardized and orderly recognition and transformation of learning outcomes

Zhuhai Vocational Education Group is one of the first national demonstration vocational education group cultivation units, and Gdit is the chairman unit of the Vocational Education Group. Zhuhai Vocational Education Group is composed of three vocational colleges, namely Guangzhou Academy of Sciences, Zhuhai Vocational College of Arts, and Zhuhai City Vocational and Technical College, as well as multiple cooperative enterprises. The three vocational colleges within the group have cooperated to carry out multiple activities such as book resource sharing, three school student sports games, three school art festivals, and three school job fairs. On the basis of the recognition and conversion of learning achievements at Guangzhou Academy of Sciences, leveraging its advantages as the chairman unit of Zhuhai Vocational Education Group, Guangzhou Academy of Sciences conducts mutual selection of general education courses and recognition of differentiated course credits with vocational colleges such as Zhuhai City Vocational and Technical College within the group. It also collaborates with cooperative enterprises within the group to deeply recognize the learning achievements of students and enterprise employees through order classes, project classes, modern apprenticeship classes, and other forms. Connect the conversion channels between different types of academic education, academic and non-academic education, and on-campus and off-campus education to serve the economic development of Zhuhai and the Guangdong Hong Kong Macao Greater Bay Area.

5. Conclusion

The recognition and transformation of learning outcomes is an important research topic in the field of

vocational education. By comprehensively evaluating learners' learning outcomes, we can gain a more accurate understanding of their mastery of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Meanwhile, the conversion mechanism of learning outcomes helps to maximize the utilization of learning resources and promote the comprehensive development of learners. On the basis of in-depth analysis of the recognition and transformation of learning outcomes in the Gdit, this article proposes suggestions for carrying out the recognition and transformation of learning outcomes: optimizing management methods, clarifying functional division of labor; standardize the process of recognizing and converting learning outcomes; building an information platform; relying on the Vocational Education Group, we will continue to carry out standardized and orderly recognition and transformation of learning outcomes. In short, the implementation of recognition and transformation of learning outcomes is of great significance for improving the quality of education and promoting educational reform. In the future, the school will continue to deepen research on the standards, processes, and quality of recognition and conversion of learning outcomes, contributing to the construction of a more comprehensive system for recognition and conversion of learning outcomes.

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Disclosure statement

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