

An Exploration of the Construction of Inner Driving Force of Cultural Education in Vocational Colleges

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Abstract: Cultural education is closely related to individual development and the needs for economic, social, and technological development, which, while aiming at improving students' overall professionalism, respects their subjective consciousness and initiative, highlights the development of personality and individual potential, and designs and improves educational activities that are characterized by cultivating people's ability to make innovation, start a business, and form a healthy personality. Taking problems existing in the cultural education in vocational colleges as the cut-in point, this paper explored the inner driving force of cultural education in the new era and tried to discuss the concept, objectives, content and mechanism of cultural education by pivoting to individual autonomy, expertise, and development goals, with the hope that the inner driving force of cultural education could be effectively carried out.

Keywords: Vocational colleges; Cultural education; Inner driving force; Mechanism construction

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1 Existing Problems

Human society has entered a new era in the 21st century. The needs for economic and technological development and the inherent requirements of human society and civilization have put forward more and higher objectives and tasks for cultural construction in vocational colleges. This cultural construction is embodied in two aspects, i.e. content and distinctive development. To identify new elements of the content

and distinctive development of a vocational college, it is necessary to make an in-depth analysis of the inner driving force of cultural education.

The so-called inner driving force of cultural education in vocational colleges refers to a series of talent development activities, which are designed to follow up the state of individual development and arouse people's cultural awareness through cultural practice based on their inner needs. These activities aim to awaken individual autonomy, enhance the reaches of their human nature, mold and perfect their personality, and finally realize the harmony between personal values and social values. The essence is education of humanity and the core is to cultivate a humanistic spirit. The inner driving force of cultural education is manifested as reflective, open, inclusive, cross-disciplinary, networking and non-utilitarian. Exploring the inner driving force of cultural education of vocational colleges will help broaden people's horizons, enlighten students, cultivate individual thinking ability, promote personal integrity, and help find their spiritual home.

However, there is a kind of obvious utilitarianism existing in cultural education in vocational colleges, which overemphasizes employment-oriented training, that is, the biological drive based on basic survival needs, or the external drive based on rewards and punishments. Many problems can be found with cultural education, including the straightforward pursuit of technical elite status while ignoring the central role of cultural literacy, the lack of cultural education in vocational education, the cutback in the number of humanities courses arranged—in particular, some humanities courses tend to be politicalized – and the lack of confidence, rational thinking, and

humanistic spirit and the overall low cultural literacy in students. The root of these problems lies in the fact that as hedonism, consumerism, utilitarianism, and pragmatic thinking become popular, the development of modern technologies is cut apart from cultural education. Moreover, in order to pursue technical utilitarianism, some colleges even downplay the role of cultivating students' cultural awareness and self-awareness, making cultural education further "alienated", which is contrary to the original principle of education. Therefore, in order to develop high-caliber technical talents adaptable to the new era, it is necessary to strengthen the cultivation of the inner driving force of cultural education, in addition to job-oriented vocational education.

2 Basis for the Construction of the Inner Driving Force of Cultural Education in Vocational Colleges

Some scholars have suggested that culture should be taken as a tangible thing while education should be regarded as a kind of inculcation of ready-made cultural knowledge, training of practical skills, and preparation of students for careers[1]. In January 2018, the Ministry of Education of China launched the Scheme for Construction of Higher Vocational Colleges and Specialties with Chinese Characteristics (referred to as the "Double High Scheme"), which puts forward new requirements and tasks for the development of the inner driving force of cultural education in vocational colleges, especially for strengthening content construction, distinctive development and the quality of talent development. President Xi Jinping pointed out in the Suggestions of CPC Central Committee on the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-term Goals for 2035 that "(vocational colleges should) adhere to moral education, enhance students' cultural literacy, sense of social responsibility, and practical skills, improve the adaptability of vocational and technical education, and develop more technical talents". He also emphasized that "(vocational colleges must) pay more attention to educating people with cultural literacy" and believed that "educating people with cultural literacy" is the gist of cultural education^[2]. The inner driving force of cultural education is a series of talent development activities that are closely linked to individual development and the

needs for economic and technological development, which, while aiming at improving individuals' basic professionalism, respects their personality traits and subjective consciousness and highlights the development of individual potential and the ability to make innovation, start a business, and form a healthy personality. In this process, the inner driving force theory should be used for interpretation. In terms of driving force, there are three forms. The first is the biological drive based on people's basic survival needs; the second refers to external motivation, that is, the driving force based on rewards and punishments; and the third is the driving force based on human inner needs, as we individuals always have a strong desire to do a thing well inside. The inner driving force of the individual is the way to truly inspire and mobilize one's enthusiasm. Inner driving force is an innate ability of a person. Once an individual possesses this inner driving force, he gains autonomy over himself and begins to dominate the development of his life.

Vocational colleges should push forward the implementation of the inner driving force of cultural education based on students' development needs and excite their inner driving force. To this end, various methods and means should be taken to ignite students' cultural self-awareness. Once students have fostered a cultural self-awareness, they will be willing to control the situation when encountering a problem, do their best to create an environment over which they have the autonomy, and take responsibility for whatever they are dedicated to. Thus it can be seen that students will become more creative if they acquire their self-awareness. Secondly, effective measures should be taken to make students more specialized so that they will have the desire to do things better. If students want to get self-motivated and devoted to a thing, they often start from creating an experience of "mental flow". For example, in the case of playing a game, we usually don't like a game that is too difficult or too simple to play. The best experience is when the challenge of the game is perfectly matched with our ability.

3 Constituent Elements of the Inner Driving Force of Cultural Education

3.1 Establish the educational concept in respect of the inner driving force of cultural education

Vocational colleges should have the idea of cultural

education and establish the core position and role of the inner driving force of cultural education in colleges' content construction and distinctive development. "The improvement of students' competence should be comprehensive, including political literacy, moral literacy, cultural literacy, scientific literacy, and physical literacy"^[3]. As far as cultural education is concerned, colleges must respect the individual differences of people that receive the education. Overemphasizing commonality while obliterating individuality will inevitably lead to the failure of essential-qualities-oriented (EQO) education and stifle a large number of people who might be highly talented in one way or another^[4]. In this regard, the new concept of cultural education in vocational colleges should be embodied in the inner driving force. Starting from students' inner reality, vocational colleges should create an environment and conditions favorable for lifelong learning and enhance students' recognition of excellent traditional cultural legacies and the hard-working and entrepreneurial spirits, so as to help them adapt to the diversified needs for human resources in the new industrial revolution and to realize the educational ideal of improving citizens' cultural literacy.

3.2 Clarify the objective and positioning of the internal driving force of cultural education

The objective of the inner driving force of cultural education in vocational colleges should be such that it could plant the seeds for a better future in students and motivate them to strive for such future from deep inside. Hence, the objective of cultural education should be embodied in a series of high-caliber technical talent development activities characterized by "cultural thinking, competence orientation, and cultural taste, with essential qualities at the core". "Cultural thinking" refers to a person's thinking of a specific cultural phenomenon, which shows his cultural value and cultural orientation. "Essential qualities at the core" and "cultural taste" are indispensable elements of cultural education, which, in particular, highlight the cultivation and shaping of students' cultural values, the training of their volitional quality, and the improvement of their cultural and artistic literacy, all based on their physical and mental development characteristics. As Dewey said, art today is by no means a piece of luxury or something superfluous. From the perspective of psychology

and sociology, [art] is a basic force in human development^[5]. This is an important guarantee for vocational college students to adapt to society and to achieve sustainable development in the future.

3.3 Create educational content in respect of the inner driving force of cultural education

Vocational colleges should cultivate the inner driving force of cultural education to enhance students' overall professionalism. They should establish a "college students cultural self-improvement center", open various optional courses pivoting to educating people with culture, engage lecturers who are specialized in culture, philosophy, and art to instruct students in cultural and artistic education and practice, and build a cultural education system centering on college mottos, campus ethos, and educational concepts. Entering the new era, the course of economic and social development has shown an increasingly obvious trend of integration of technology and culture. The "technology" required by vocational colleges tends to be more complex and comprehensive, whose improvement relies very much on the enrichment of the content of the inner driving force of cultural education. In this era, the sole purpose of personal abilities and social technologies is for application, and application becomes meaningful only by improving people's professionalism. However, the exertion of abilities and the transformation of technologies do not entirely depend on people's personal factors; some non-intellectual, non-technical factors, such as cultural values, moral taste, volitional character, and psychological well-being, also matter.

4 Construction of Mechanisms for the Cultivation of Inner Driving Force of Cultural Education in Vocational Colleges

4.1 Build a mechanism for the cultivation of inner driving force in curriculum

Vocational colleges should combine their educational objectives with students' personality traits and press forward to strengthen and improve in cultural education: (1) innovative curriculum arrangement. Colleges should broaden their offerings of majors, update their teaching content constantly, and arrange more courses for majors that are highly generalized, widely applicable, and convey more basic cultural knowledge and skills, so as to enhance students'

ability to respond to, absorb and innovate new technological developments; and (2) innovative teaching methods. Colleges should pay attention to individual autonomy over learning and the flexibility of the teaching system, use new technical means, especially information technology and the Internet, to continuously improve their teaching methods, and give more play to the roles of heuristic, case study, group discussion, MOOC, and scenario-based teaching methods in classes, thus forming a good humanistic literacy education atmosphere and developing a sense of innovation and an entrepreneurial ability in students.

4.2 Build a mechanism for the cultivation of inner driving force during college-enterprise cooperation education

The topic of education is to offer all people, as rational beings, the access to the knowledge of all things and the ability to control all things in the world.^[6] In the course of cultivating the inner driving force of cultural education in vocational colleges, focus should be laid on improving the education and teaching mode, boosting individuals' cultural thinking, enhancing their social adaptability, and establishing a systematic, open, flexible and diversified, college-enterprise highly integrated educational mechanism. Vocational colleges should refresh ideas constantly, explore new ways of educating students, and design a new mechanism that could form and cultivate the inner driving force of cultural education. To this end, it requires "effective support and help from enterprises, industries, and the government, including specialty construction, faculty construction, internship arrangement, employment arrangement, fund support, etc."^[7] In addition to acquiring technical skills, students' internship and apprenticeship in enterprises and teachers' arrangements for technical practice and training should enable students to feel the corporate culture of companies they are working for as interns and apprentices and should focus on the conveying of vocational education related cultural elements, such as the teamwork spirit and the dedication spirit.

4.3 Build a mechanism for the cultivation of inner driving force during industry-academic integration education

Vocational colleges should include an abundance of cultural education content into the curriculum in an

interesting manner and inculcate cultural elements into students' internship, training and daily practice, so that they can have a good understanding of the front line work, well participate in the production process, and appreciate the essence of corporate culture during the participation. By admitting students to teachers' technical research and development projects, vocational colleges should guide them to participate in and carry out technological inventions and creations and develop a hardworking and perseverance spirit, with the purpose of forming a basic scientific spirit and a sense of professionalism in them. Colleges should rely on on-campus and off-campus laboratories to set up experimental bases for undergraduate entrepreneurship education and to provide various platforms, laboratories and research conditions for students and teams that stand out with excellent innovation and entrepreneurship capabilities. For entrepreneurial teams that have shown some success in running a business, moral encouragement, technical guidance, and financial support should be offered to encourage them to appreciate the corporate culture in entrepreneurship education and to form the self-awareness and ability in respect of cultural literacy. Vocational colleges should create necessary conditions and atmosphere for student entrepreneurship education.

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