

# Innovative Research on Funding and Educating People in Applied Colleges and Universities Under the Perspective of Labor Education

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**Abstract:** As an important part of the “Five Education,” labor education is a practical activity for cultivating labor values, labor skills, and labor spirit (also named craftsman spirit). This article points out the importance of integrating labor education into the process of “funding and educating people” in applied colleges and universities. It also explores the role of labor education as a starting point from the three aspects of labor values, labor skills, and labor spirit. It provides an innovative path for applied colleges to fund and educate people.

**Keywords:** Labor education; Applied colleges; Financial support for educating people

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## 1. Background

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that the ultimate goal of modernization is to achieve the free and comprehensive development of people <sup>[1]</sup>. Promoting the all-round development of people is the basic value orientation of Marxism. “Capital Theory” points out that “for all children who have reached a certain age, future education is a combination of production and labor with intellectual education and sports. It is not only a way to improve social production, but also the only way to create a fully developed person” <sup>[2]</sup>.

In 2020, China issued “Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Colleges and Universities in the New Era,” which pointed out the unique nurturing value of labor and emphasized the integration of labor education into the process of talent training. Labor education has a profound value and orientation of “educating people.” In 2017, the “Implementation Outline for the Project to Improve the Quality of Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities” was introduced, incorporating “funding to educate people” into the “top ten education systems” to achieve a shift in the “educating people” policy from “supporting poverty” to “fostering wisdom” and “supporting the poor” to “fostering ambition.” According to the 2022 China Student Financial Assistance Development Report, the number of aided students in China was nearly 96 million, with an increase of 5.09%, and the amount of funding exceeded 180 billion yuan, with an

increase of 11.45%. Funding has continued to grow rapidly for 11 consecutive years. The state has invested a lot of money and has fulfilled its solemn promise to “not let a difficult student drop out of school.” The new era and novel changes have put forward new requirements for funding the education of people. As a starting point for “educating people,” there is a natural link between labor education and financial support for educating people. This article discusses the following: integration of labor education into the whole process of funding and educating people, to empower underprivileged students to break free from the passive mentality of “waiting/depending/wanting,” generate wealth, identify developmental paths through labor, experience the value of life in practice, and fundamentally overcome the challenges associated with psychological poverty; addressing the regional economic needs through the cultivation of applied talents adapted to industrial demands, enhancement of the growth opportunities for disadvantaged students, and prevention of the students from returning to poverty; establishment of a financial education system with labor education as a starting point to enhance the internal driving force of students in need, promote students’ all-round development, and form a virtuous cycle of nurturing work.

## **2. Necessity of integrating labor education into the funding model of applied colleges and universities**

### **(1) Intrinsic value of labor education**

Improving the overall quality of students is inseparable from practice. Engels proposed that “labor created man itself,” and “any nation, if it stops working, needless to say, in a year, a few weeks, will also perish”<sup>[3]</sup>. Labor is the foundation of Marx’s ideology and theory, the core of Marx’s ideological and theoretical system, and the first link in a series of theories such as Marxist philosophy, political economy, and scientific socialism. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Party placed special emphasis on “training socialist builders and successors for the all-round development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, and labor.” The “Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Deepening Education and Teaching Reform and Improving the Overall Quality of Compulsory Education” puts forward five types of education, namely moral education, intellectual education, sports, aesthetic education, and labor education. The “Five Education Simultaneously” education policy runs through every aspect of the development of education in our country, serving as the country’s fundamental education policy. Among them, labor education is necessary to achieve quality education, it is an intrinsic requirement for Marxist Sinicization, an important starting point for talent development, and the spiritual core of achieving Chinese-style modernization. Promoting labor education is a specific requirement of the country’s macroeconomic policy, as well as an intrinsic requirement for promoting the value of labor itself.

### **(2) Important means for the development of applied colleges**

Xi Jinping pointed out that “for whom, and how to train people” has always been a fundamental issue in education<sup>[4]</sup>. In the information age, technology is advancing rapidly, and talent is a trinity. China’s modernization process is inseparable from talent. On March 25, 2023, during his visit to Fujian, Xi Jinping emphasized, “Establishing morality and building people is a fundamental task, adhering to the direction of applying technology, setting up majors and laying a good foundation to meet social needs, and cultivating socialist builders and successors for the all-round development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, and artistic labor”<sup>[5]</sup>. It highlights the important position of applied talent training in the talent training system. The 2023 National Education Work Conference also emphasized that talent training should serve the regional economy and encourage colleges and universities to comprehensively

improve the quality of independent talent training. Cultivating applied talents urgently needed by the regional economy is a requirement of national development trends. For underprivileged students, learning knowledge and improving skills is a fundamental strategy to move forward into society and completely get out of poverty. As General Secretary Xi Jinping said during his visit to Fuping County in Hebei Province, “Combating poverty first, curing foolishness and raising children in impoverished regions is a fundamental strategy for poverty alleviation” [6]. It is essential to integrate labor education into the training of applied talents, enhance the practical skills of underprivileged students, improve their confidence in dealing with the workplace, provide a steady stream of internal motivation for their future development, and fundamentally resolve the problem of underprivileged students returning to poverty.

### **3. Research on innovative funding models for educating people**

#### **3.1. Integrating labor values into the system of supporting education**

When participating in voluntary tree-planting activities in the capital, Xi Jinping pointed out that for the comprehensive development of moral, intellectual, physical, and artistic labor, the role of “labor” must not be ignored, and labor awareness should be cultivated from an early age. In response to China’s current “financial aid system with government funding, schools and social support as a supplement, with free funding and paid funding as an aid for the poor, and supplementary for merit” [7], poverty alleviation focuses on “fostering ambition” and “fostering wisdom”. The connotation of funding for education can be understood as a system designed by the funding part to protect the basic educational rights of students in vulnerable groups (mainly due to family economic difficulties, certain psychological problems, distorted values, etc.). It is based on financial assistance aiming at promoting the overall development of the recipients in their life outlook, value outlook, honor outlook, morality outlook, knowledge, and skills [8]. Labor has a unique educational nature that promotes moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic development. Applied university features in cultivating talents with a solid foundation of knowledge and more importantly emphasizing craftsmanship spirit. Craftsmanship spirit is a kind of professional spirit, specifically, it means dedication, excellence, focus, and innovation. Integrating labor values into the system of supporting education is a good and efficient method to cultivate talents with those personal qualities. Firstly, labor fosters morality. Secondly, labor enhances intelligence. Integrating labor education with the funding process establishes the ideology that labor is the most honorable, noblest, greatest, and most beautiful. The approach is to integrate with the on-campus labor curriculum, combine labor education with the improvement of students’ comprehensive quality, and incorporate the concept of labor education into the whole process of talent training. For example, setting up a “cooking class” to encourage students to make meals, feel the unique charm of food, and enrich life skills; or setting up a “Chinese cultural literacy training” course to guide students to experience traditional handicrafts such as “tea art,” “weaving,” and “mounting,” and help students master handicraft skills through cultural interaction and experience; setting up “emergency aid” course, teaching and guiding various emergency aids in life, encouraging students to learn aid knowledge; setting up “scientific and technological innovation ability training,” organizing a visit to industries with local features for students to experience all kinds of instruments and equipment, forming their early dreams about future career.

#### **3.2. Integrating labor skills into funding for human development**

Labor is practice with an emphasis on hands-on skills. Applied colleges place great importance on students’ practical, hands-on skills, and aim to cultivate advanced applied talents with strong problem-solving skills

and innovative thinking. Therefore, with a good practice environment, the expansion of the quality of schools, and applied talent training, the development of practical skills for students from economically disadvantaged families has been strengthened. The first approach is changing the traditional funding methods, focusing on the funding processes with the core of development funding<sup>[9]</sup>. For example, setting up relevant quality improvement practical courses, such as speech eloquence courses, information technology courses, foreign language courses, etc., to stimulate students' creativity and enhance their hands-on skills. Secondly, it is necessary to carry out internship practices and public welfare practical projects, such as setting up volunteer service associations for students to participate in social service activities; and providing internship programs to encourage students to thoroughly gain work skills and improve their overall communication and adaptability skills. The third method is to change the "student aid" model, develop a new work-study aid model, and create work-study positions with different types, such as research assistant, teaching assistant, and management assistant requiring intellectual abilities; with public welfare labor, logistics service and security with labor forces requirements as the main content, and network management, multimedia operation, design and publicity positions with technical skills as the primary working contents. Subsequently, the work style is changed, focusing more on entrepreneurship and innovation. For example, organizing competitions about entrepreneurship, or setting up career planning pathways within work-study programs. By allowing students to experience becoming entrepreneur owners, they can realize the importance of enhancing their ability to innovate and start businesses, which is meaningful for their future development both in life and in work.

### **3.3. Integrating the spirit of labor into the value leadership of funding and educating people**

The educational function of Financial Support for Educating People includes two aspects: economic support and spirit education, which take labor spirit and moral character as the core and the application method and goal of each other. Except for financial support, educating people is the final goal of the funding process. In order to fulfill this target, three actions should be taken. Firstly, the positive role of labor role models is maximized. Labor models are integrated into funding publicity work to set an example for students to be self-reliant and cultivate a love for work. Labor models are explored by organizing activities. For example, "Self-Improvement Stars" selection and publicity activities are launched, sharing their labor stories, encouraging students to actively participate in labor practices, and creating a good campus atmosphere for diligence and improvement. Then, labor models with different tunnels are actively propagandized both online and offline, such as digital media, class meetings, etc. Secondly, it is vital to guide the development of the spirit of dedication to labor. Aspiring college students are encouraged to go where the motherland needs them most, improve themselves to contribute to the country and exert their labor spirit, serve the community and their hometown, and relay rural revitalization. Last but not least, with the combination of labor practice and moral education, students can participate in summer services in rural areas, contribute to development initiatives in the Western region, involve themselves in community service and other voluntary services, such as carrying out labor education in fields, factories, workshops, school communities, and other places. This enables students to connect with real-life experiences, fostering values like respect for laborers, appreciation for the outcomes of labor, and a genuine love for the act of labor itself, deepening education on labor spirits. In the process of participating in voluntary service activities, the spirits they learned would guide them to grow up as a mature adult with a positive mind, a strong sense of responsibility, and practical skills. Making good use of typical propaganda, labor practice, and other methods to educate and guide the students to establish positive and correct labor values is essential and worth promoting.

## 4. Values of research

### (1) Theoretical significance

The important function of subsidizing education is to encourage college students to build their spirit of self-improvement and self-reliance, which is also the important core of cultivating applied talents. The spiritual appearance of college students involves establishing self-reliance and improving their personal character and temperament by solving economic and ideological difficulties. The research on the combination of labor education and financial support for educating people makes up for the lack of theory, as well as developing a new way for other universities to apply labor education. If it works, this strategy even can be promoted in other places.

### (2) Practical significance

Labor education is the CPC's (Communist Party of China) new requirement for education in the new era, and it is an important content of the socialist education system with Chinese characteristics. By organizing various forms of labor education activities, a strong working atmosphere will be created, and the endogenous power of students' love of labor will be stimulated. Combining labor activities with financial assistance aims to educate and guide students to learn how to work, how to be diligent, how to be grateful, and how to help others, and to inspire students to grow into socialist builders and successors with all-round development in virtue, intelligence, physical fitness, mental health, and community service. More importantly, integrating labor education with career development could improve students' technical skills, communication skills, as well as logical thinking skills, cultivating students who can overcome any difficulties and challenges in the new era.

### (3) Development requirement

Strengthening labor education in the new era is of great significance to the country. Cultivation of applied talents with hardworking and devoted spirits is the inner requirement of the development of a nation. It is not an easy process for China to move from a nation with strong manufacturing power to one with an intelligent manufacturing power. Excellent labor can create social wealth and promote social innovation. In the new era, through strengthening labor education, we can cultivate creative workers, which is a great improvement in the quality of workers and a necessary effort for China to keep up with the development trend of the times. Improving labor education strategy in the new era can provide a solid foundation and inexhaustible driving force for achieving the "two centenary goals" and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

## 5. Conclusion

Poverty alleviation through education is one of the "Five Education" in the precise poverty alleviation strategy, and is an important starting point for poverty alleviation<sup>[10]</sup>. Education is a basic livelihood project to prevent people from returning to poverty. Funding is a strong support for education. It is an important position and strong support for the fight against poverty, and is a basic task for promoting equity in education. "Hematopoietic funding" is more conducive to underprivileged students to improve their overall quality and enhance their practical skills, thus achieving high-quality poverty alleviation. Applied colleges and universities have unique practical advantages to integrate labor education as action starters, and use the funding model to shape students' correct labor concepts, cultivate students' excellent labor skills, and establish a dedicated labor spirit. This is a strong support for the "Five Education" system and has important theoretical and practical significance.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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