

Analysis of the Construction of Core Literacy of Students in Vocational Undergraduate Education

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Abstract: Vocational undergraduate education has evolved from its initial stages to a full-scale implementation, achieving historic milestones along the way. However, its appeal still lags significantly behind that of general education. The development of students' core competencies in vocational undergraduate education faces several challenges, including the need for improvements in top-level design, a stronger focus on connotation development, and an upgraded linkage mechanism. To address these issues, it is suggested to refine the top-level design, enhance internal motivation, and build a robust vocational education ecosystem.

Keywords: Vocational undergraduate education; Core literacy; Construction

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1. Introduction

Higher vocational education is one of the important and indispensable components of higher education, which promotes social and economic development by cultivating high-quality and skillful talents for society. Along with the rapid growth of science and technology, there is a crisis of "supply" in the knowledge structure and operation skills of talent training in the field of education, which cannot meet the needs of technical talents in the field of high technology. The Opinions on Promoting the High-Quality Development of Modern Vocational Education proposed that by 2025, the enrollment scale of vocational undergraduate education is not less than 10% of the enrollment scale of higher vocational education^[1]. The development of vocational education is inevitable to solve the problem of vocational skills training. Focusing on the cultivation of students' core literacy in vocational education is to pay attention to the most fundamental problem of education to "cultivate people"^[2].

2. Components of core literacy of vocational education students

Vocationally skilled personnel, who carry the important responsibility of becoming "skilled craftsmen" and "master craftsmen of the nation," require talent development that crosses multiple disciplinary boundaries

and fosters the characteristics of cross-border integration. With the development of new productivity, new requirements have been put forward on what kind of basic quality and core ability students should have in the future, and how vocational education can cultivate such basic quality and core ability. The core qualities of the vocational field are the generalization, clustering, and transformation of vocational standards, which are acquired, teachable, learnable, and transferable. In specific cultivation practice, education experts and teachers follow the characteristics of the type of vocational education to build a system of core literacy for vocational education students and to promote the coordinated development of students' personal and social development. In the training of students, the focus is shifted from knowledge transfer to the cultivation of competence and quality, so that students can have a high level of comprehensive quality, critical and creative thinking, and the ability to identify and solve problems.

Core literacy is the common and indispensable literacy that every student needs to achieve a successful life and adapt to the lifelong development of individuals and social development^[3]. China's core literacy for student development is centered on the cultivation of a "well-rounded human being"^[4], and the literacies complement and promote each other, and play a role in different contexts as a whole. Yanpei Huang proposed that the purpose of vocational education is to foster personal development, prepare individuals for making a living, enable them to serve the community, and enhance the productivity of the nation and the world. He emphasized that achieving this requires an educational method that integrates both manual and intellectual skills. This approach provides a theoretical framework for constructing the core competency system for vocational education students.

3. Positioning of core literacy of vocational undergraduate education students

Vocational undergraduate education is oriented to the future high-speed development of the country, cultivating high-level technical and skilled talents who have a broad general knowledge foundation, solid professional knowledge, and strong technical skills, and can solve complex practical problems and put forward higher requirements on the breadth and depth of knowledge. Compared with students of higher vocational specialties, the core literacy of students of vocational undergraduate education is deeper and broader in terms of knowledge structure, technical structure, and skill structure. Higher vocational specialization is "to cultivate higher technical applied specialists as the fundamental task, to adapt to the needs of society as the goal." It can be seen that, under the premise of adapting to the needs of social and economic development, higher vocational specialization focuses on the mastery and application of certain professional skills, and cultivates higher technical and applied talents for the front line of production. Compared with higher vocational specialties, the training of students in vocational undergraduate education attaches more importance to systematic professional thinking training, requiring students to not only master the skills but also to be able to find, analyze, and solve problems. Compared with general undergraduate education, in terms of cultivation mode, vocational undergraduate education focuses on transforming theoretical knowledge into technical application, while general undergraduate education constructs a knowledge system based on disciplines, favors the research of basic theories and disciplinary knowledge, focuses on the completeness of students' disciplinary knowledge system, and cultivates students' scientific research and innovation ability. In terms of quality structure, general undergraduate education focuses on the cultivation of students' academic awareness, problem awareness, and innovation awareness, while vocational undergraduate education mainly focuses on the cultivation of students' social competence, teamwork

awareness, cooperation awareness, and communication skills. In comparison, the core qualities of students in vocational undergraduate education focus on practical and social skills, while the core qualities of students in general undergraduate education focus on the construction of theoretical knowledge of disciplines and professional sensitivity.

4. Dilemma facing the cultivation of core literacy of students in vocational undergraduate education

In recent years, the development of vocational education has also made historic achievements, but there is still a big gap in the attractiveness between vocational education and general education.

First, the top-level design needs to be improved. In terms of the evaluation system, it is constructed on its own according to the characteristics of talent cultivation in institutions, lacking an overall design and institutional support, and presenting evaluation standards with their characteristics^[5]. The development history of vocational undergraduate education is relatively short, and it follows the development model and assessment standards of research universities, which leads to the weakening of applicability and practicability, and there is a tendency to “emphasize diploma and neglect occupation.” The new round of scientific and technological revolution needs a more diversified discipline system as support and vocational undergraduate education should pay more attention to the construction of special disciplines.

Secondly, the connotation construction needs to be strengthened. At present, vocational education undergraduates are still in the stage of scale expansion, and there are problems such as poor connection with national strategies, unclear positioning of talent cultivation, insufficient basic conditions for running schools, etc. The characteristics of vocational education need to be strengthened. There are big differences in the foundation of school running, school running philosophy, development orientation, etc. Some schools are influenced by the general undergraduate education philosophy, there are fundamental problems such as deviation from the vocational education “track,” and falling into the low-level imitation of research-oriented colleges and universities, and it is difficult to talk about leading the development of vocational education. In the process of student training, vocational undergraduate colleges and universities attach importance to teaching professional knowledge and improving practical skills, ignoring the cultivation of students’ core vocational literacy.

Thirdly, the linkage mechanism needs to be upgraded. Industry-teaching integration and school-enterprise cooperation are important ways for vocational education to cultivate high-quality technical and skilled talents. At present, although vocational education institutions have carried out school-enterprise cooperation, the two sides have not carried out in-depth cooperation in terms of professional settings, curriculum design, teaching practice, training base construction, talent evaluation, etc. In particular, the two sides of the school enterprise have neglected the cultivation of students’ vocational morality, independent learning, teamwork, and information and technological literacy, which has led to students’ knowledge and skills learned in school failing to meet the demands of talents in enterprises.

5. Specific path and promotion strategy for the cultivation of students’ core literacy in vocational undergraduate education

5.1. Overall systematic promotion dimension: Improving the top-level design

It is necessary to strengthen the mechanism guarantee and build a corresponding framework system. To build

a scientific and reasonable system for the cultivation of students' core literacy in vocational undergraduate education, it is necessary to optimize the professional curriculum system, professional teaching standards, and talent training quality monitoring and evaluation system. We strengthen the standardization of student core literacy training and the construction of the framework system, play a fundamental role in the standards and quality of vocational undergraduate education talent training, and build a framework system that can be promoted and replicated. As the main body of education implementation, schools should place the cultivation of students' core literacy in the construction of the curriculum system, and formulate corresponding teaching standards and evaluation standards; in teaching practice, they should pay attention to the cultivation of students' core literacy, such as independent thinking and cooperative inquiry. Based on the top-level design of the core literacy of vocational education, the specific cultivation goals and tasks of each discipline should be further clarified, and the vertical articulation and horizontal coordination of the educational stage and disciplinary curriculum should be strengthened ^[6]. Vocational education at the undergraduate level is an inevitable choice to improve China's modern vocational education system and must implement the "staggered with the general undergraduate school, to meet the needs of high-end technical and skilled personnel training" school of thought.

We also promote school-enterprise cooperation and integration of production and education. Innovating the organization of school-enterprise collaborative education, promoting the integration and coordinated development of science and education, industry-teaching integration, and constructing a "value- and demand-driven" collaborative education mechanism are not only the key support for the construction of a modern vocational education system but also the strategic direction of China's vocational undergraduate education that must be adhered to in the future development of undergraduate education. It is important to mobilize the initiative of enterprises to educate people, improve the internal motivation of enterprises to participate in educating people, realize the common construction of bases, resource sharing, technology research, and talent training, and create a community of industry-education integration in which scientists, skilled craftsmen from various industries, and other kinds of talents "gather in one class" to enhance the effectiveness and stability of school-enterprise collaborative education. A master teacher studio is established to form a team of mentors, improve the team's ability to guide the actual combat projects, build a project-based curriculum system, open up the "post, course, competition, and certificate integration" pathway of education, implement the whole process of education and assessment and evaluation, and cultivate high-quality technical and skilled talents in the field of network security with a rigorous and pragmatic spirit, sincere and refined professional quality and the ability to develop sustainably.

5.2. Individual social participation dimension: Enhancing internal motivation

Ideals and beliefs should be strengthened. Ideal belief is the foundation of college students. Nowadays, with the rapid development of informatization, the convergence and integration of various ideologies and cultures, and social trends, contemporary young people have diversified ideological concepts and diverse value pursuits and are influenced by historical nihilism, which is prone to bad ideological concepts. As the cradle of cultivating high-quality technical and skilled talents, vocational undergraduate colleges and universities should first make efforts to cultivate students' core qualities, including ideals, beliefs, and moral character. Through the school atmosphere, teacher leadership, activities infiltration, etc., students are led to establish a correct moral character, turning the pursuit of personal values into the pursuit of the mainstream ideological values of society. High ideals and beliefs are fundamental for students to correctly perceive the process of

national development, enhance their career orientation, and improve their sense of responsibility and mission to serve the country.

Responsibility should be strengthened. Vocational undergraduate education students are an important part of China's human resources, as a representative of high-quality technical and skilled personnel, the cultivation of responsibility-bearing literacy is indispensable. Cultivating students' responsibility-bearing literacy means guiding students to set their minds right, to have high aspirations, to integrate their personal development into the wave of national reform and development in the new era of industrial and technological change, strengthen their vocational skills, vocational literacy and ethics, and to bravely take on the heavy responsibility of the era's development, "realizing high-quality 'vocational man' shaping and qualified 'social person' shaping integration." The responsibility of vocational education students is reinforced to firmly commit themselves to economic and social development according to the needs of the country, cultivating the people required for the progress of the times and the revitalization of the nation.

5.3. Personal career development dimension: Building a robust vocational education ecosystem

"1 + N" comprehensive development ability is promoted. Undergraduate vocational education is not solely to improve academic qualifications, but should also focus on "career" and "skills." One-sided pursuit of a bachelor's degree will not only fail to solve the problem of quality and structure of the talent team but also lose the existing position of vocational education. Highlighting the core professional skills is an important embodiment of the overall quality of vocational education students, vocational education is an important factor that distinguishes it from general undergraduate education. Core professional skills are the important cornerstone for students to enter the workforce, adapt to the working environment, and increase their competency in the workplace. The cultivation of core qualities of vocational undergraduate education students should take the enhancement of core professional skills as the starting and ending point. Through "combination of training and education," "integration of coaching," "integration of courses and certificates," and other forms, students' core professional skills can be improved. As the level of intelligence and technology in the industry continues to rise, the market is in urgent need of high-level complex, and comprehensive talents. It is based on this internal logic that the cultivation of students' core qualities in vocational undergraduate education must be transformed from focusing on the professional ability to cultivating compound development ability, and from emphasizing the cultivation of a single ability to the cultivation of comprehensive ability, to cultivate students' "1 + N" comprehensive development ability.

Students' craftsmanship literacy needs to be cultivated. It is both the need to transform and upgrade China's economy and enhance the core competitiveness of individual students in vocational undergraduate colleges and universities. Emphasis on "craftsmanship" in the core literacy training of vocational undergraduate education students is not only a need for the connotative development of vocational education, but also an inevitable requirement for the transformation and upgrading of China's manufacturing industry in the current economic development into a new normal for the quality of human resources. The essence of "craftsmanship" is the organic unity of vocational quality and product demand, the combination of technical skills and vocational beliefs, "virtue" and "talent" comprehensive display, but also the core and hand of vocational quality education. Quality education is the core and grasp. Focusing on the leadership of students' "craftsmanship," we cultivate their spirit of concentration, their ability to strive for perfection, and their energy and drive to pursue higher levels of technical skills from the aspects of learning, practicing,

researching, and creating at a higher level of professional skills, and enhance their state of mind and professional attitude towards pursuing professional skills.

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