

Research on Innovative Paths of Class Talent Management by Counselors in Higher Vocational Colleges in the New Era

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Abstract: Under the background of the new era, vocational education has ushered in a strategic upgrade with the positioning of “type education.” As the main position for cultivating technical and skilled talents, higher vocational colleges are facing new challenges in talent management, such as the diverse personalities of Generation Z students, the accelerated digital transformation, and the deepened requirements of “all-staff, whole-process, and all-round education.” Based on the fundamental task of fostering morality and cultivating people, combined with the school-running characteristics of higher vocational colleges of “practice orientation and integration of production and education,” this paper explores the innovative paths of talent management by counselors from four dimensions: concept reshaping, mechanism coordination, method innovation, and team empowerment. The purpose is to improve the efficiency of talent management and help cultivate high-quality technical and skilled talents with “both moral integrity and professional skills, and integration of work and study.”

Keywords: Higher vocational colleges; Counselors; Talent management

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1. Introduction

Counselors are the “first responsible persons” for ideological education in the process of talent cultivation in higher vocational colleges. Class management, as the core carrier of counselors’ work in colleges and universities, is directly related to the quality of talent cultivation and campus stability. The report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China clearly proposes to “coordinate the collaborative innovation of vocational education, higher education, and continuing education, and promote the integration of vocational and general education, the integration of production and education, and the integration of science and education,” pointing out the direction for the development of higher vocational education in the new era. The “National Vocational Education Reform Implementation Plan” also emphasizes “strengthening ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges and improving the mechanism for building counselor teams”^[1]. However,

the current talent management of classes by counselors in higher vocational colleges still has problems such as the solidification of “management-oriented” thinking, insufficient application of digital tools, loose collaborative education mechanisms, and lagging response to students’ personalized needs^[2]. Therefore, exploring innovative paths of class talent management that meet the requirements of the new era and highlight the characteristics of higher vocational education has become an important issue that needs to be solved urgently.

2. Practical challenges of talent management by counselors in higher vocational colleges in the new era

The new era endows higher vocational education with new missions, and also makes talent management face multiple challenges, mainly reflected in the following three aspects.

2.1. Student level: Impact of Generation Z’s characteristics and diversified needs

Higher vocational students are mainly composed of “Generation Z,” showing distinct characteristics of the times:

- (1) Diverse values: Affected by the fragmentation of online information, some students have low recognition of vocational education and suffer from “academic anxiety” and “employment confusion,” so ideological and political education needs to be more targeted.
- (2) Normalization of digital survival: Students are used to obtaining information through short videos and social platforms, but their ability to distinguish information is insufficient, making them vulnerable to the influence of harmful ideological trends.
- (3) Complex student source structure: In addition to general high school graduates, the proportion of “non-traditional students” such as secondary vocational students, veterans, and migrant workers is increasing. Different student sources have significant differences in knowledge foundation, career planning, and behavioral habits, putting forward higher requirements for personalized talent management^[3].

2.2. Management level: Disconnection between traditional models and higher vocational characteristics

- (1) Serious “transactional” tendency: Counselors need to undertake a large number of transactional tasks, such as attendance checking, evaluation of excellent students, financial assistance, and safety, which occupy the time for ideological and political guidance and in-depth education, leading to management that “emphasizes process over effect.”
- (2) Outdated methods and means: They still rely on traditional methods such as “holding meetings for publicity, checking dormitories and roll calls, and filling out paper forms.” The application of digital tools only stays at the level of “information release,” failing to realize dynamic monitoring and precise intervention of students’ behavior, academic performance, and psychology.
- (3) Disconnection from professional training: Class talent management lacks linkage with professional training, integration of production and education, and career planning. It fails to integrate “craftsmanship spirit” and “model worker spirit” into daily management, making it difficult to meet the educational goal of “integration of work and study” in higher vocational education^[4].

2.3. External level: Insufficient policy requirements and resource coordination

- (1) Difficulty in implementing “all-staff, whole-process, and all-round education”: The enthusiasm of

departments, professional teachers, enterprise mentors, parents, and other subjects to participate in class talent management is insufficient, and the educational synergy of “all-staff, whole-process, and all-round” has not yet been formed ^[5].

- (2) Pressure of digital transformation: Although the construction of smart campuses has been generally promoted, the functions of class talent management modules are scattered (such as attendance systems, psychological evaluation systems, and academic early warning systems are not connected), and the value of data has not been fully explored.
- (3) Higher employment-oriented requirements: Higher vocational education is employment-oriented, but links such as career planning guidance, industry dynamics transmission, and enterprise resource connection in class management are weak, failing to effectively help students’ career development.

3. Innovative paths of talent management by counselors in higher vocational colleges in the new era

In response to the above challenges, it is necessary to build an innovative path from four dimensions: concept, mechanism, method, and team, based on “student-centered, fostering morality and cultivating people as the fundamental, and higher vocational characteristics as the support.”

3.1. Concept reshaping: Transformation from “management-oriented” to “service-leadership-oriented”

Concept is the soul of management. Class management in the new era needs to break through the “control thinking” and establish three core concepts:

- (1) “Student-oriented” service concept: Shift the focus of management from “restricting behavior” to “meeting needs”, focus on the four major needs of students: “academic development, career planning, mental health, and life services”, and establish personalized growth files of “one student, one file” ^[6]. Strengthen basic subject tutoring for secondary vocational students, provide vocational skill connection support for veterans, and guide the cultivation of practical abilities for general high school graduates.
- (2) “Integration of moral integrity and professional skills” concept: Closely follow the dual main lines of “technical skills + ideological and political education” in higher vocational education, and deeply integrate class talent management with professional education. For example, form “skill competition groups” based on classes, counselors cooperate with professional teachers to connect with enterprise projects, and infiltrate “quality awareness” and “safety awareness” in training; carry out “model workers entering classes” activities, invite industry craftsmen to share their career experiences, and cultivate students’ craftsmanship spirit.
- (3) “Student autonomy” democratic concept: Break the “counselor-led” model and build a class autonomy system of “counselor guidance + student backbone leadership + full participation”. Through methods such as “class councils” and “online voting” ^[7], let students independently formulate class rules, organize activities, and manage affairs. For example, students are responsible for the operation of the class official WeChat account to spread professional dynamics and positive energy, and enhance class sense of belonging.

3.2. Mechanism coordination: Building a “five-in-one” collaborative education system

Relying on the requirements of “all-staff, whole-process, and all-round education”, integrate multiple resources, and establish a “five-in-one” collaborative mechanism of “counselors + professional teachers + enterprise mentors + student backbones + parents” to form educational synergy, as shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Summary of the “five-in-one” collaborative mechanism

Collaborative subjects	Core responsibilities	Collaborative paths
Counselors	Overall coordination, ideological and political guidance, psychological counseling, daily management	Hold regular collaborative meetings to summarize students' situations; build an online collaborative platform to share students' growth files
Professional teachers	Academic guidance, professional ideological and political education, skill training	Design “curriculum ideological and political” theme class meetings combined with course content; participate in the guidance of class skill competitions
Enterprise mentors	Career planning, industry dynamics, practical guidance	Carry out “enterprise open day” activities; provide internship and employment recommendations for students; participate in class career planning lectures
Student backbones	Class autonomy, information transmission, activity organization	Take the lead in setting up study groups and cultural and sports groups; assist counselors in handling transactional work; feedback students' needs
Parents	Family support, concept guidance, home-school communication	Establish a parent WeChat group to regularly push students' study and life situations; invite parents to participate in “parent open day” activities

Through this mechanism, the predicament of “counselors fighting alone” is broken, and the organic integration of “ideological and political education, professional education, vocational education, and family education” is realized. For example, through “five-in-one collaboration”, a mechanical and electrical professional class in a higher vocational college organized students to participate in enterprise production line training. Professional teachers were responsible for technical guidance, enterprise mentors explained post specifications, counselors simultaneously carried out ideological and political education on “labor spirit”, and parents witnessed students' practical achievements through video calls, which significantly improved students' professional identity and class cohesion.

3.3. Method innovation: Digital empowerment of smart class talent management

Leverage digital transformation to build an “online + offline” integrated smart class talent management model, and improve management accuracy and efficiency:

- (1) Build a smart class talent management platform: Integrate functions such as attendance checking, leave application, academic early warning, psychological monitoring, and information release to realize “one-time data collection and multi-terminal sharing”^[8]. For example, automatically count students' class attendance rate through the platform, trigger “academic early warning” for students who are absent continuously, and counselors intervene in a timely manner, combined with feedback from professional teachers; use the psychological evaluation module to regularly monitor students' psychological status, and automatically remind counselors to intervene for risk signals such as depression and anxiety.
- (2) Use new media to innovate ideological and political carriers: According to the preferences of Generation Z students, build a new media matrix such as “class short video accounts” and “WeChat official accounts,” and push content such as “craftsman stories,” “professional frontiers,” and “Party history

learning.” For example, shoot a series of short videos of “My Enterprise Learning Vlog” to let students share their practical experiences in enterprises, and implicitly convey professional spirit; carry out “online theme class meetings” to improve the participation of ideological and political education through bullet screen interaction and voice connection sharing.

- (3) Big data-driven precise education: Construct students’ “growth portraits” by analyzing data from smart platforms (such as learning time, training performance, social interaction, consumption habits, etc.)^[9,10]. For example, for students with “excellent training performance but weak theoretical scores”, coordinate professional teachers to provide personalized tutoring; for students who “frequently browse content related to employment anxiety”, carry out one-on-one career planning guidance in conjunction with enterprise mentors to realize precise management of “one policy for thousands of people.”

3.4. Team empowerment: Improving counselors’ “dual-qualified” management capabilities

The counselor team is the core support for the innovation of class talent management. It is necessary to improve their comprehensive capabilities of “ideological and political + professional + management” around the characteristics of higher vocational education:

- (1) Strengthen the cultivation of “dual-qualified” literacy: Incorporate counselors into the “dual-qualified” teacher training system of higher vocational colleges^[11,12], encourage counselors to obtain industry vocational qualification certificates (such as psychological counselors, career guidance teachers, professional-related skill certificates), and participate in enterprise practice training, so that they can not only carry out ideological and political education, but also understand professional training goals and connect with industry needs.
- (2) Establish special training and teaching research mechanisms: Regularly carry out special training on “innovation of class talent management in higher vocational colleges,” “application of digital tools,” and “psychological crisis intervention”; set up a “class talent management teaching and research group” for counselors^[13,14], carry out discussions on topics such as “management of non-traditional students” and “design of class activities integrating production and education,” and summarize and promote excellent cases.
- (3) Improve the assessment and incentive mechanism: Optimize the counselor assessment indicators, include “collaborative education effectiveness,” “application of digital management,” and “quality of students’ career development” into the assessment, and commend and reward counselors with outstanding innovations in class talent management to stimulate their innovation motivation.

4. Conclusion

The innovation of class talent management by counselors in higher vocational colleges in the new era is an inevitable requirement to respond to the reform of vocational education, meet the diverse needs of students, and improve the quality of education. By “reshaping concepts” to establish a service-leadership orientation, “coordinating mechanisms” to integrate multiple educational resources, “innovating methods” to leverage digital empowerment, and “empowering teams” to strengthen counselors’ comprehensive literacy, a new class talent management model that fits the characteristics of higher vocational education and highlights the characteristics of the times can be built^[15]. In the future, it is necessary to further combine the practice of specific colleges and

universities, continuously optimize the innovative paths, and make class talent management truly an important carrier of “fostering morality and cultivating people and skill training”, providing a solid guarantee for cultivating more high-quality technical and skilled talents with “both moral integrity and professional skills”.

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