

# Research on Reform Ideas and Promotion Strategies for Labor Education in Higher Education

**Xiaona Luan<sup>1</sup>, Yu Gao<sup>1</sup>, Xuli Jiao<sup>1</sup>, Jing Jing<sup>1</sup>, Huixuan Li<sup>2\*</sup>, Zhaoliang Jiang<sup>1,3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Engineering training center, Shandong University, Jinan 250001, Shandong, China

<sup>2</sup>Library of Shandong University, Jinan 250001, Shandong, China

<sup>3</sup>School of Mechanical Engineering, Jinan 250001, Shandong, China

*\*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

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**Abstract:** In the context of the new era, labor education, as an important component of the theoretical system of socialist education with Chinese characteristics, has been officially incorporated into the Party's educational policy. This article aims to explore the role, implementation priorities, challenges in promotion, and improvement strategies of labor education in higher education. Through literature review and empirical research, this article analyzes the importance of labor education in promoting the comprehensive development of students and enhancing the quality of higher education, and proposes specific implementation suggestions. The study finds that labor education not only cultivates students' practical abilities and innovative spirit but also helps them form a positive outlook on employment and entrepreneurship. However, labor education faces many challenges in its implementation, such as integrated layout, resource construction, integration of labor and education, and evaluation mechanisms. This article suggests that universities should strengthen the construction of labor education curriculum groups, develop a labor education checklist, and explore labor education demonstration positions to promote the effective implementation of labor education.

**Keywords:** Labor education; Practical ability; Innovative spirit; Reform strategy

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## 1. Introduction

When elaborating on the comprehensive development of human beings, Marx and Engels, the founders of Marxism, mentioned the importance of labor in this process. They believed that the essence of human beings lies in labor, and the comprehensive development of human beings requires the integration of mental and physical labor to achieve free and comprehensive development<sup>[1]</sup>. This theory provides an important theoretical basis for the implementation of labor education in higher education.

The document "Guidelines for Labor Education in Primary and Secondary Education (Trial)" issued by

the Ministry of Education proposes to strengthen the construction of the teaching staff, improve the funding mechanism, and enhance professional research and guidance. Clarify the management requirements for labor education teachers, ensure that they enjoy equal treatment with other full-time teachers, and promote teacher communication and sharing mechanisms. At the same time, higher education institutions should strengthen the training of labor education teachers, establish labor education-related majors where conditions permit, and incorporate labor education into various training contents to enhance labor education awareness <sup>[2]</sup>. The Opinions on Strengthening Labor Education in Primary and Secondary Schools in the New Era issued by the State Council put forward basic principles such as grasping the direction of education, following educational laws, reflecting the characteristics of the times, strengthening comprehensive implementation, and adapting to local conditions. It emphasizes that labor education is an important component of the national education system, with comprehensive educational value in cultivating morality, improving intelligence, enhancing physical fitness, and cultivating beauty <sup>[3]</sup>. The Ministry of Education's document "Guiding Outline for Labor Education in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education (Trial)" proposes requirements for strengthening the construction of teacher teams, improving funding mechanisms, and enhancing professional research and guidance. It clarifies the management requirements for labor education teachers, ensures that they enjoy equal treatment with other full-time teachers, and promotes a mechanism for teacher exchange and sharing <sup>[3,4]</sup>.

At the same time, institutions of higher learning should strengthen the training of labor education teachers, establish relevant majors in labor education where conditions permit, and incorporate labor education into various training contents to enhance the consciousness of labor education. The "Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education in the New Era" issued by the State Council proposes basic principles such as grasping the direction of educating people, following the laws of education, reflecting the characteristics of the times, strengthening comprehensive implementation, and adhering to local conditions. It emphasizes that labor education is an important part of the national education system and has comprehensive educational value in cultivating morality, enhancing intelligence, strengthening physical fitness, and fostering beauty.

The Ministry of Education's document "Guiding Outline for Labor Education in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education (Trial)" proposes requirements for strengthening the construction of teacher teams, improving funding mechanisms, and enhancing professional research and guidance. It clarifies the management requirements for labor education teachers, ensures that they enjoy equal treatment with other full-time teachers, and promotes a mechanism for teacher exchange and sharing <sup>[5]</sup>. At the same time, institutions of higher learning should strengthen the training of labor education teachers, establish relevant majors in labor education where conditions permit, and incorporate labor education into various training contents to enhance the consciousness of labor education. The "Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education in the New Era" issued by the State Council proposes basic principles such as grasping the direction of educating people, following the laws of education, reflecting the characteristics of the times, strengthening comprehensive implementation, and adhering to local conditions <sup>[6]</sup>. It emphasizes that labor education is an important part of the national education system and has comprehensive educational value in cultivating morality, enhancing intelligence, strengthening physical fitness, and fostering beauty.

With the deepening of educational reforms, universities are increasingly emphasizing students' all-round development, moving beyond mere knowledge transmission. Labor education, as an important pathway to promoting students' all-round development, has gradually gained attention and importance from universities. As society develops, the demand for talent is constantly changing. Modern society needs individuals with an

innovative spirit and practical abilities, and labor education can cultivate these abilities in students<sup>[7-9]</sup>. Therefore, the research background of labor education in higher education is closely related to societal needs.

University students are at a crucial stage of personal growth, facing issues such as career choices and life planning. Labor education can provide students with practical opportunities, helping them understand society and industries, improving their employability, and simultaneously promoting their personal growth and development.

In summary, the research background of labor education in higher education is multifaceted. It has a certain theoretical foundation, meets the needs of educational reform, and is closely related to social needs and student development. Higher education should fully recognize the importance of labor education and actively explore effective ways and methods to implement it to promote students' all-round development. Labor education plays a vital role in the reform of higher education teaching and learning; it not only promotes students' all-round development but also drives the overall improvement of higher education. Therefore, the role of labor education in the reform of higher education teaching and learning is crucial.

## 2. The role of labor education in higher education

In higher education, the importance of labor education is becoming increasingly prominent. Labor education plays a crucial role in cultivating the all-round development of university students, exerting a subtle influence, particularly on their moral character, intellectual abilities, and physical fitness. Labor is the foundation of human survival and development; through labor education, students can cultivate positive qualities such as appreciating the fruits of labor, respecting the labor of others, and being grateful to society.

Labor education contributes to students' moral development and is crucial for college students to establish correct labor values. It not only cultivates students' love and respect for labor but also fully inspires their spirit of diligent work. Through labor education, students can deeply understand the hard work of laborers, thereby cultivating a good work ethic. This process has profound significance for realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation<sup>[10]</sup>.

The comprehensiveness and integrated nature of labor education make it an important way to enhance college students' practical abilities, thinking skills, and adaptability. Through labor practice, students strengthen their logical thinking and improve their teamwork and organizational skills. Labor education promotes intellectual development, enabling students to test and deepen their theoretical knowledge in practice.

The functions of labor education in inheriting and innovating knowledge are listed: Through labor, specific skills and knowledge required by various industries can be inherited and innovated, laying a foundation for students' future career development. The role of continuing and guiding creative thinking: The process of labor requires continuous problem-solving and innovation, which plays an important role in cultivating students' creative thinking. Furthermore, the promotion of labor education in universities helps college students develop strong psychological qualities through experiencing hardship and sweating, and temper their will through arduous struggle and tenacious effort, thereby gaining valuable spiritual wealth that will benefit them throughout their lives; it also helps college students form a positive outlook on employment and entrepreneurship, finding a balance between national and social needs and the realization of personal value, and between professional learning and job matching, forming an independent and diversified positive employment perspective, and enhancing their entrepreneurial and innovative awareness and abilities.

In conclusion, labor education is an important component of higher education and is of great significance for students' all-around development and future career planning.

### 3. Key points, difficulties, and improvement strategies for implementing labor education

Implementing labor education in higher education institutions requires focusing on cultivating students' practical abilities and innovative spirit, conducting targeted labor education based on the characteristics of their majors, innovating teaching methods, improving the evaluation system, strengthening the teaching staff, and creating a positive campus culture.

#### 3.1. Integration into talent cultivation programs

According to the "Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Primary and Secondary Schools in the New Era" issued in March 2020, and the "Guidelines for Labor Education in Primary and Secondary Schools (Trial)" formulated by the Ministry of Education in July 2020, it is emphasized that "labor education should be incorporated into the national curriculum for primary and secondary schools and the talent cultivation programs for vocational schools and regular universities, forming a comprehensive, practical, open, and targeted labor education curriculum system." "Regular universities should incorporate labor education into their professional talent cultivation programs and clarify the main courses upon which it is based."

**Table 1** shows the integration of labor education into talent cultivation programs at 68 universities. It can be seen that since 2019, the proportion of labor education in talent cultivation programs has been increasing year by year, and universities are gradually paying more attention to it. However, some problems exist, mainly the following: labor education has goals but lacks support; it has theory but lacks practice, failing to be integrated throughout the entire talent cultivation process. Therefore, integrating labor education into talent cultivation programs is one of the difficulties in its implementation.

**Table 1.** 68 universities' programs for integrating labor education into talent development

Time (Year)	Number of schools integrating talent development programs	Cumulative
Before 2019	14	21%
2019	5	28%
2020	17	53%
2021	25	90%
2022	7	100%
Total	68	100%

#### 3.2. Establishing compulsory labor education courses

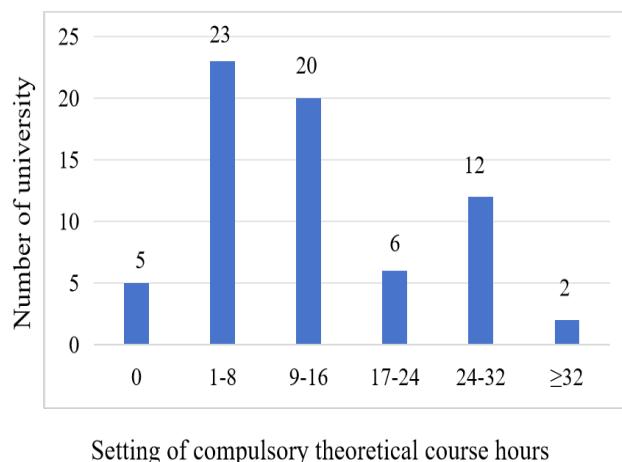
A comprehensive, practical, open, and targeted labor education curriculum system should be established. Compulsory labor education courses should be set up in primary, secondary, and tertiary schools according to the characteristics of each educational stage to systematically strengthen labor education. Schools must earnestly assume primary responsibility for labor education, clearly define the implementing institutions and personnel, and ensure that all labor education courses are offered.

Regular institutions of higher learning should clearly define the main courses upon which labor education should be based. They may establish dedicated labor education modules within existing curricula or offer compulsory labor education courses, with no less than 32 class hours at the undergraduate level. The course

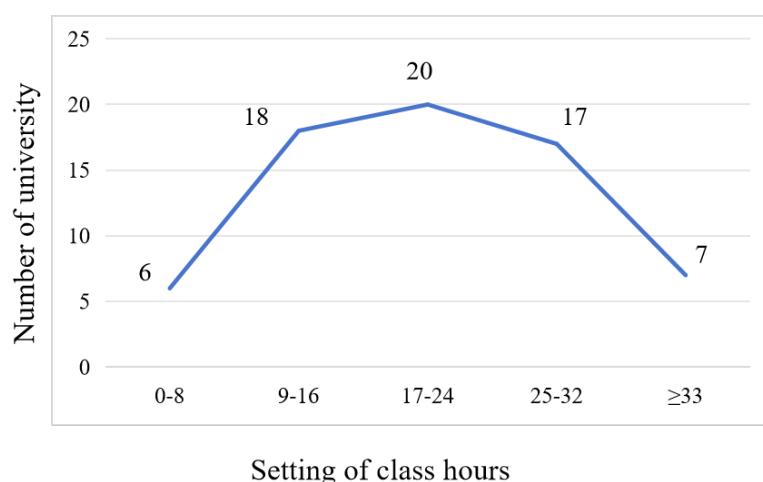
content should strengthen education on Marxist labor theory, popularize general labor science knowledge closely related to students' career development, and provide necessary practical experience.

Offering compulsory labor education courses is essential for clarifying and guaranteeing the status of labor education, a crucial means of implementing the new requirements for labor education in higher education in the new era, an inherent requirement for improving students' labor literacy, and currently an urgent and paramount task for labor education in higher education.

According to statistics, the allocation of theoretical and practical class hours for compulsory labor education courses in Shandong Province universities is shown in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**, respectively. As can be seen from these two figures, in terms of theoretical class hours, 2 universities have more than 32 hours, 43 universities have less than 16 hours, and 5 universities have 0 hours; in terms of practical class hours, 6 universities have less than 8 hours, with most universities ranging from 9 to 32 hours. Overall, the allocation of class hours emphasizes practical application over theoretical application. The development of course quality standards needs to be strengthened; a few universities have adopted a purely online teaching format.



**Figure 1.** Statistical chart of the theoretical credit hours for compulsory labor education courses in universities in Shandong province.



**Figure 2.** Statistical chart of labor education practice hours set in colleges and universities in Shandong Province.

Analysis of the survey results reveals the following opinions and demands from university students regarding labor education: Labor courses lack rich content, are overly theoretical, and lack practical components; the didactic approach to labor education lacks appeal and interest; students experience a low level of satisfaction with current labor education and express a strong desire and expectation to participate in practical labor; they suggest enriching the implementation methods and channels of labor education to ensure its continuous integration into daily life; and they favor organizing labor-based activities such as career experiences and social practice exercises that take place outside the campus and into the real world of work, grounded in authentic labor scenarios.

### **3.3. Implementing labor education week**

Primary, secondary, and tertiary schools shall establish a Labor Week each academic year, which may be arranged independently within the academic year or during winter and summer vacations, with collective labor as the main activity. Universities may also arrange a Labor Month to centrally implement the requirements of the Labor Week for each academic year. To effectively organize and implement Labor Week, universities should organize students to go out into society and focus on off-campus labor training.

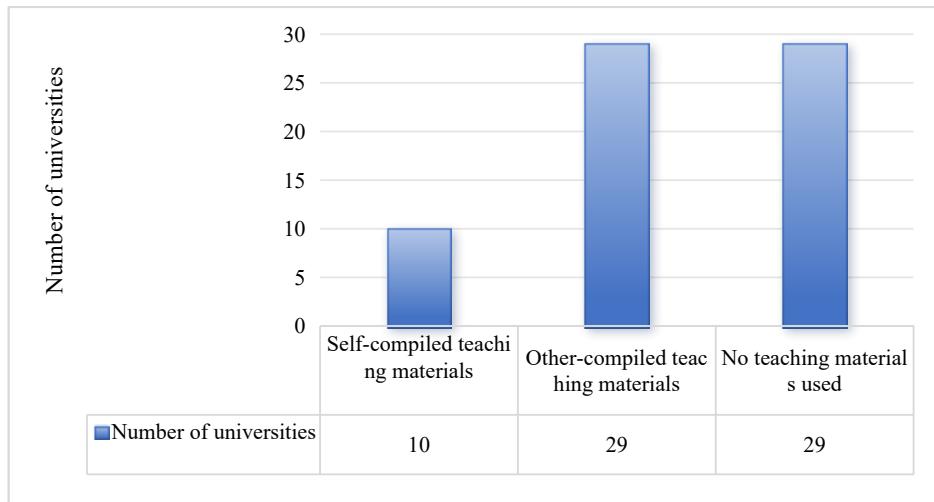
Research indicates that some schools have not yet established fixed labor weeks (months), the content and forms of activities are not rich enough, and there is a phenomenon of labor without education in some universities.

### **3.4. Difficulties in promoting labor education**

The implementation and promotion of labor education also face the following challenges: integrated planning of labor education, construction of labor education resources, integration of labor and professional education, and evaluation of labor education.

An integrated planning of labor education is a prerequisite and a guideline. This includes the integrated development of responsibilities, resources, funding, and teachers. Issues to consider include: How to define the responsibilities and rights of the leading and collaborating departments? How to coordinate the resources and strengths of the entire school? How to select and train labor education teachers? How to ensure necessary funding and other support?

Resource development for labor education is the foundation and vehicle for the construction of labor education courses in universities. According to statistics, the usage of labor education textbooks in 68 universities in Shandong Province is shown in Figure 3. Ten universities have developed their own self-compiled labor education textbooks; 29 universities have not used any textbooks; Shandong University of Business and Technology, Heze University, and Shandong Management University have published labor education textbooks with first-tier publishers such as Higher Education Press; Binzhou Medical University and Shandong University of Political Science and Law are actively exploring characteristic textbooks suitable for different disciplines such as medicine and law, indicating that there are deficiencies in the total number of labor education textbooks, the quality of textbooks, and the availability of characteristic textbooks.



**Figure 3.** Usage of labor education textbooks.

## 4. Implementation plan for labor education in higher education institutions

In terms of labor education talent cultivation, Shandong University emphasizes the comprehensive implementation of the Party's education policy, fulfilling the fundamental task of cultivating morality and fostering talent, incorporating labor education into the talent cultivation plan and the entire process, taking the integration of “five aspects of education” as the starting point, grasping the orientation of labor education, innovating the labor education mechanism, and constructing a comprehensive, theoretical, practical, open, contemporary, and targeted labor education curriculum system. Through the construction of a labor education curriculum group, the development of a “7 + N” list of labor education, and the identification of exemplary labor education posts, the specific implementation plan is as follows:

### 4.1. Constructing a labor education curriculum cluster

Universities should construct a diversified labor education curriculum cluster. These courses should cover both theoretical knowledge and practical skills to meet the needs of students from different majors and with different interests. The construction of the curriculum cluster should be based on the following principles:

- (1) Comprehensiveness: The course content should cover multiple aspects of labor education, including labor values, labor skills, and labor laws and regulations.
- (2) Practicality: The courses should emphasize practical operation, allowing students to learn and experience labor through hands-on experience.
- (3) Openness: The courses should be open to external participation, allowing students from different majors and grades to participate, in order to promote interdisciplinary learning and exchange.
- (4) Targeted Approach: The courses should provide personalized learning paths tailored to the characteristics and needs of different students.

### 4.2. Develop a “7 + N” list for labor education and identify exemplary labor education positions

The “7+N list” is a classification method for labor education content. “7” represents the core content of labor education, while “N” represents additional content customized according to school characteristics and student

needs. Core content may include:

- (1) Labor Concept Education: Cultivating students' correct understanding and respect for labor.
- (2) Labor Skills Training: Teaching students basic labor skills and professional ethics.
- (3) Labor Laws and Regulations: Enabling students to understand labor-related laws and regulations.
- (4) Labor Safety Education: Improving students' awareness of labor safety and their self-protection abilities.
- (5) Labor Innovation Practice: Encouraging students to innovate and improve in labor.
- (6) Labor Culture Experience: Experiencing different labor cultures through participation in various labor activities.
- (7) Labor Spirit Cultivation: Cultivating students' labor spirit, such as diligence, perseverance, and cooperation.

The "N" part can be customized according to the school's actual situation and students' needs, such as adding labor practices in specific industries, international labor exchange projects, and labor competitions.

### **4.3. Discover model posts for labor education**

Universities should identify and establish a number of exemplary labor education positions, which can be located within the university or in partner companies outside the university. The objectives of these exemplary positions should consider the following aspects:

- (1) Providing a practical platform: Providing students with real-world work opportunities, allowing them to learn and grow in a realistic work environment;
- (2) Demonstrating the value of labor: Showcasing the value and importance of labor through exemplary positions, enhancing students' understanding of labor;
- (3) Promoting student employment: Exemplary positions can serve as a bridge for students' employment, helping them transition more smoothly into the workplace;
- (4) Strengthening university-enterprise cooperation: Strengthening the connection between the university and industry through cooperation with enterprises, providing students with more learning and development opportunities;
- (5) The selection of exemplary positions should consider factors such as industry representativeness, educational significance, and safety guarantees, ensuring that students can engage in labor practice in a safe and beneficial environment.

Through the above implementation plan, universities can effectively promote labor education, cultivate students' labor awareness and skills, and lay a solid foundation for their future careers and social lives.

## **5. Conclusion**

Labor education plays a vital role in higher education, not only affecting students' all-round development but also being key to improving the quality of higher education. This article analyzes the theoretical foundation, key points of implementation, and difficulties in promoting labor education, and proposes a series of improvement strategies to provide reference and guidance for its implementation in universities. The implementation of labor education requires the joint efforts of universities, teachers, students, and society. Through continuous exploration and practice, a scientific, systematic, and effective labor education system can be formed. In the future, universities should continue to strengthen the construction of labor education courses, innovate teaching methods, and improve evaluation mechanisms to cultivate more high-quality talents with innovative spirit and

practical abilities, making greater contributions to social development.

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## Disclosure statement

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