

Practice Exploration of Digital Transformation Empowering “Vocational Education Going Global”

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Abstract: With the continuous advancement of vocational education reform, “Vocational Education Going Global” has become an important direction for the development of vocational education. However, in practice, “Vocational Education Going Global” still faces problems such as regional barriers and uneven resource allocation, which affect its actual effect. As an inevitable path for vocational education reform in the new era, digital transformation provides new ideas for solving the dilemmas and challenges of “Vocational Education Going Global”. This paper discusses the value and practical paths of digital transformation, empowering “Vocational Education Going Global”, aiming to provide a reference for relevant stakeholders.

Keywords: Digital transformation; Vocational education going global; Value; Practical paths

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1. Introduction

As an important direction for the high-quality development of China’s vocational education, “Vocational Education Going Global” is not only a key channel to export China’s vocational education experience and disseminate professional skills, but also an important carrier to strengthen international educational cooperation and promote cultural exchanges. Nevertheless, in the actual implementation, “Vocational Education Going Global” is confronted with difficulties such as mismatched digital resources and cross-regional implementation^[1]. With its advantages of convenient operation, high efficiency and rich resources, digital transformation can integrate high-quality resources, facilitate the alignment of Chinese and foreign standards, and break geographical restrictions, thus offering new opportunities for the high-quality development of “Vocational Education Going Global”. In this regard, vocational colleges should seize the opportunity of digital transformation and explore innovative paths for digital empowerment of “Vocational Education Going Global”, so as to contribute to the internationalization of vocational education and the cultivation of high-quality talents.

2. Value of digital transformation empowering “vocational education going global”

2.1. Breaking regional barriers and realizing efficient cross-border teaching

Vocational education is highly practical. Under the traditional model of “Vocational Education Going Global”, it is often restricted by geography and time-zone differences, making it difficult to deliver high-quality teaching resources or meet the needs of students’ real-time practice and two-way teacher communication. Digital transformation provides a powerful solution to this problem. For example, by building digital education platforms, geographical barriers in “Vocational Education Going Global” can be removed to share high-quality educational resources. Online digital teaching can effectively address time-zone issues and the alignment of teaching standards, enabling cross-regional, regular and efficient vocational education, further reducing costs and resource input and ensuring smooth teaching activities^[2].

2.2. Aligning Chinese and foreign standards and promoting international adaptation of professional systems

Taking tourism management as an example, foreign curricula are consistent with local industrial standards, while domestic vocational college programs are designed to meet local industrial needs. This creates discrepancies in teaching standards under “Vocational Education Going Global” and hinders international development. Digital transformation uses digital tools to deeply align vocational education standards and steer professional systems toward “two-way adaptation”. For instance, digital platforms can clarify talent requirements and post skill standards of tourism management industries and enterprises at home and abroad, so as to construct a new curriculum system based on joint Chinese and foreign standards. Digital tools can flexibly update textbook content in line with both domestic and foreign teaching standards, improving the quality of talent training under “Vocational Education Going Global” and matching talents with global tourism industry demands^[3].

2.3. Enriching training modes and improving talent quality and competitiveness

The core of vocational education is to cultivate students’ comprehensive practical ability. The application of digital transformation can upgrade the traditional talent-training mode of “Vocational Education Going Global” from “conventional” to “digital”, providing sufficient practical opportunities and improving training quality. For example, digital platforms can simulate real work scenarios such as tourist reception (tourism management) and housekeeping service (hospitality management), enabling Chinese and foreign students to conduct immersive professional practice and solve difficulties in practical training base construction and resource utilization^[4]. Meanwhile, in a digital environment, teaching becomes more precise: digital tools can analyze students’ learning status, track progress and identify weaknesses, allowing targeted tutoring. In addition, digital tools promote interaction between Chinese and foreign students, broadening their international vision, enhancing cross-cultural communication skills and strengthening international competitiveness, laying a foundation for future employment.

3. Practical paths of digital transformation empowering “vocational education going global”

3.1. Building a digital cooperation platform to consolidate the foundation

Building a digital cooperation platform is essential for “Vocational Education Going Global” in the digital era. Vocational colleges can cooperate with overseas institutions to establish a dedicated digital platform to integrate teaching materials, training resources and faculty, facilitating the implementation of “Vocational Education Going Global”^[5]. Specifically, the platform should include three major functions: First, there is the

digital teaching function, which includes modules such as recorded teaching, live teaching, online Q&A, and digital homework, to eliminate the influence of traditional geographical and time differences and ensure the “asynchronous learning + synchronous interaction” between both parties. For example, the hotel management major uploads digital courses to the platform, and students use the platform for self-study. At the same time, teachers will use the platform to conduct live teaching and online Q&A at appropriate times to help students solve their learning problems and improve their learning quality. Second, there is the resource sharing function, which includes sharing digital courseware, training videos, teaching standards, industry cases, etc. to promote multi-dimensional alignment in the talent cultivation of both parties^[6]. For example, the cooperating university in Malta, the Tourism College, can upload their local service standards and course resources, while our university can share domestic relevant service experiences and standardized processes, etc. This not only enriches the teaching resources of both parties but also ensures the adaptability of talent cultivation. Third, there is the communication and interaction function, which provides a platform for both schools and teachers to exchange experiences and conduct teaching discussions. At the same time, it opens a window for students to interact and compete, promoting interaction and communication between teachers and students and enhancing their cross-cultural communication skills. In addition, the platform needs to be adapted to multiple language environments, supporting language switches between Chinese, English, and Maltese, to eliminate language barriers and ensure the smooth conduct of teaching and communication.

3.2. Constructing a digital curriculum system to align Chinese and foreign professional standards

“Vocational Education Going Global” should prioritize optimizing the curriculum system and use digital technology to restructure curricula that align with Chinese and foreign professional standards and meet industrial talent demands^[7]. For example, based on the demand for hospitality and catering in China and Malta, the International School (a Sino-foreign cooperative institution) can integrate core courses from both sides, incorporate industrial standards and practical experience, and form composite curriculum modules. Meanwhile, digital technology supports the development of “digital + practical” featured courses. Virtual simulation technology can create scenarios for tourist reception, guest room and catering service, improving professional skills. Digital courses can also compare catering cultures between China and Malta to broaden cultural vision and enhance cross-cultural service capabilities. Furthermore, curriculum content should be dynamically adjusted according to real industrial and enterprise needs to improve timeliness and practicality and achieve precise matching between professional training and industry demand^[8].

3.3. Developing a digital training system to strengthen practical ability

The training system is an important link for ensuring the quality of vocational education’s talent cultivation in vocational education. In this context, under the background of vocational education going global, vocational colleges should rely on digital technology to innovate the training system and provide assistance for the cultivation of students’ practical abilities^[9]. For example, considering the strong practical nature of the hotel management and digital operation majors, digital technology can be used to create an “online + offline” mixed training platform. Online, through the construction of virtual scenarios, it can promote students’ training, and offline, it can collaborate with enterprises to assist students’ training, allowing students to conduct practical training based on real job positions to understand the work process of the vocational position, improve their service awareness and professional qualities, and thereby solve the cross-regional problems under the context

of vocational education going global and promote the cultivation of students' practical abilities. Secondly, relying on digital technology to promote the collaboration of offline training can involve collaborating with foreign universities. Through the online platform, shared training venues and equipment resources can be shared, and cross-regional joint training can be carried out to promote the high-quality advancement of practical education work. For example, organizing Chinese and foreign students to conduct online joint banquet planning activities. During this process, both students work collaboratively, using digital platforms for communication, scheme design and result sharing, in order to promote the cultivation of students' comprehensive professional abilities, teamwork abilities and practical innovation capabilities. On this basis, relevant personnel from the hotel and catering industries and enterprises in both countries can also be introduced. Through digital platforms, practical and training education guidance can be provided to students, bringing them professional suggestions and guidance, so that they can understand the employment needs of the current society's related industries and promote their all-around growth and development.

3.4. Building a digital teaching team to secure support

The key to education lies in teachers. The teaching staff is the core force for vocational education to go global, and it directly affects the quality of vocational education's talent cultivation. In this context, in the digital era, we should accelerate the establishment of a teaching staff with digital skills, international perspectives, and professional capabilities to provide talent support for the effective promotion of vocational education going global^[10].

First, we should actively carry out digital teacher training to enhance the digital teaching ability of professional teachers. For example, we can jointly organize training sessions and symposiums with relevant experts on online teaching, virtual training, and digital course development, bringing advanced knowledge and skills to teachers and enhancing their digital teaching ability. At the same time, we can also use digital technology to guide foreign teachers to conduct online training, share international digital teaching experiences and industry standards, and promote the cultivation and improvement of both sides' digital teaching skills.

Secondly, we should actively promote the interaction and communication between the teaching staff of both sides. For example, we can build a digital communication platform for Chinese and foreign teachers, guiding teachers to conduct online interactive discussions, joint lesson planning, and course development activities, to promote the improvement of both teachers' abilities and qualities. Again, we can regularly hold online open class activities, guiding teachers from both sides to listen and evaluate each other's classes, promoting the mutual exchange and sharing of educational experiences, and guiding the improvement of both teachers' comprehensive qualities. Moreover, we should pay attention to the improvement of the structure of the teaching staff, actively hire industry experts to join the teaching staff, and inject new vitality into the teaching staff for vocational education going global. For example, we can invite digital operation experts and technical backbone from hotels and catering industries in both China and abroad to provide online part-time teaching and training guidance, enrich the teaching staff, integrate industry cutting-edge technologies and practical experience into the teaching process, and enhance the practicality and targeted nature of teaching.

Finally, we should pay attention to the optimization of the teacher evaluation mechanism to promote the improvement of teachers' comprehensive abilities and qualities. For example, we can incorporate digital teaching ability, international communication ability, professional skill level, etc., into the teacher evaluation system, motivating teachers to actively improve their own qualities to meet the development needs of vocational education going global.

4. Conclusion

In short, digital transformation provides new opportunities and paths for “Vocational Education Going Global”, effectively solving problems in cross-border teaching, standard alignment and practical training, and boosting high-quality development. Vocational colleges should adapt to the digital era, innovate the mode of “Vocational Education Going Global”, build digital cooperation platforms, curriculum systems, training systems and teaching teams, promote complementary resources, aligned standards and win-win talent training, comprehensively improve talent-training quality, and continuously elevate the international level of China’s vocational education.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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