

Reflections on the development of education and teaching of students in contemporary vocational colleges and universities

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Abstract: With the issuance of the *Decision of the State Council on Accelerating the Development of Modern Vocational Education*, which comprehensively deploys the accelerated development of modern vocational education, bringing new opportunities and challenges to the development of vocational education in China, the teaching of student education in contemporary vocational colleges and universities in the context of this guidance will reveal new features and face unprecedented challenges.

Key words: *Decision of the State Council on Accelerating the Development of Modern Vocational Education*; vocational education; student education and teaching

1 Introduction

In June 2014, the State Council issued the *Decision on Accelerating the Development of Modern Vocational Education* (hereinafter referred to as the *Decision*), which comprehensively deploys the accelerated development of modern vocational education [1]. The *Decision* specifies the guiding ideology, basic principles, objectives, tasks and policy measures for accelerating the development of modern vocational education in the coming period. Under the guidance of the *Decision*, based on the current new situation of social and vocational development, the education and teaching of students in vocational colleges and universities are facing new characteristics and challenges.

2 Interpretation of the *Decision of the State Council on accelerating the development of modern vocational education*

2.1 A guiding principle

The guiding ideology is the first key point. The guiding ideology in the *Decision*, as the main theme, is prominent and clear. It is pointed out that vocational education should "adhere to the foundation of moral education to serve the purpose of development, and be oriented to promoting employment". The development of vocational education is a clear fundamental direction, with virtue as the foundation, service as the purpose, and employment as the development goal and fundamental requirement. It is necessary to adapt to the current technological progress and changes in production methods, as well as the needs of social public service, which is determined by the direction of vocational education personnel training. Any technology has its own cycle. To cultivate skilled talents in the new era, vocational colleges need to make adjustments in talent cultivation plans and teaching content at any time based on changes in technology and production

methods. The ultimate goal is to deepen the reform of institutional mechanisms and promote the construction of a modern vocational education system.

2.2 Three basic principles

2.2.1 The principle of serving demand and being employment-oriented

The fundamental purpose of vocational education is to serve the comprehensive development of society and economy [2]. During school, students are matched with their careers, which is different from undergraduate education. After enrollment, students are closely connected with the school, enterprises, and society. This is determined by the quality of vocational education, ultimately promoting the integration of professional settings with industry needs, curriculum content with vocational standards, teaching and production processes, graduation certificates with vocational qualifications, vocational education with lifelong learning. It also focuses on improving the employability of young people.

2.2.2 The principle of integrating industry and education and characteristic education

The *Decision* states: "synchronize the planning of vocational education with economic and social development, coordinate the promotion of human resources development and technological progress, and promote educational and teaching reforms in conjunction with industrial restructuring and upgrading. Highlighting the characteristics of vocational colleges and universities, and strengthening collaborative education between schools and enterprises". The first part of this is a series of requirements for the administrative departments in charge of education, and the second part is a new challenge for schools.

Currently, vocational institutions are building the concept of running schools with characteristics. How to highlight the differences with general education is the "key" to the sustainable development of vocational institutions. The biggest feature of vocational schools is the "integration of industry and education", that is, the integration of education and occupation, school-enterprise cooperation to cultivate vocational and skilled personnel.

2.2.3 The principle of systematic cultivation and diversified success

The *Decision* states: "Promote the close convergence of secondary and higher vocational education, give full play to the fundamental role of secondary vocational education in the development of modern vocational education, and give full play to the important role of higher vocational education in optimizing the structure of higher education. Strengthen communication between vocational education and general education, and build 'overpasses' for students' diversified choices and multiple paths to success." The improvement of the vocational education structure provides more possibilities for students, emphasizing their development in academic careers and equipping them with the skills to enter society and carry out work at any time. For example, after graduation from secondary schools, students can be employed or can further their studies. They can also choose the "3+2" five-year system starting from secondary school and graduate with a higher vocational diploma. Higher-vocational students can be employed, or go on to specialization, or study for a master's degree directly after working for three years.

3 New features in the development of student education and teaching in vocational colleges and universities

Under the guiding background of the *Decision*, the teaching and education of students in contemporary vocational colleges and universities are characterized by the following three features.

3.1 Students' poor cultural foundation and low starting point

At present, with the adjustment of the proportion of secondary school enrollment and the enrollment ratio of the college entrance examination, the quality of vocational college students as well as the education and development of the students have a greater impact on the quality of vocational colleges and universities. The students are no longer those with

strong knowledge base, solid specialties and studiousness. Instead, they are students who have weak cultural knowledge, failing the middle and high school entrance exams, and relying on cell phones with poor self-consciousness. These students tend to have a weak sense of organization, lack learning ability, and have half-knowledge of the problems they encounter. As a result, it leads to some difficulties and challenge in carrying out education and teaching.

3.2 Unclear understanding of the connotation of vocational education

At present, most students as well as their parents are not clear about the fundamental layout of strengthening vocational education in China. There are roughly two possibilities for students to participate in vocational education, one is the education path that the children have to choose because of their insufficient learning ability and inability to enter ordinary high schools and universities. The second is that parents desperately want their children to work as early as possible, so that they can join the workforce after graduating from vocational education and share the economic pressure for their families. In this case, both parents and students are unclear about the connotation of vocational education, and there is a half-understanding of the situation.

3.3 Students' inaccurate self-positioning and vague career planning

Currently, students in higher vocational colleges and universities are partly only children and partly students whose families are suffering. The characteristics of only children are that they are pampered at home, afraid of suffering, lack of exercise, and do not have clear learning goals and career planning. Another part of the students may have limited knowledge of other members of the family, resulting in students crossing the river by touching the stones after entering the school, unclear positioning of self-planning and lack of planning guidance.

Many higher vocational students do not position themselves at all when doing career planning, do not know what they really want, do not know what their character is suitable for, not to mention what kind of life they really want and how they want to live. Busy at school every day, they don't know where to use force, cannot distinguish their strengths and weaknesses, sometimes have good ideals, sometimes lack confidence in themselves, and lack motivation. This is the current situation faced by senior students.

4 New challenges in the education and teaching of students in vocational colleges and universities

4.1 Positioning and transformation of teachers' roles

4.1.1 From the traditional knowledge transmitter to the guide of student learning

In the new era, vocational education should emphasize the main position of students and focus on cultivating students' independent learning, innovative thinking, teamwork and other abilities. Therefore, teachers should not just instill knowledge in a one-way manner, but should establish an equal, interactive and shared learning relationship with students, stimulate students' interest and motivation in learning, guide students to explore issues and solve problems, and co-construct knowledge and complete tasks together with students.

4.1.2 From traditional teaching to the combination of school-enterprise cooperation and production-education integration

In the new era, vocational education should adhere to the curriculum reform which is fundamentally guided by the principle of cultivating morality, serving development and promoting employment, and focuses on cultivating students' knowledge base, professional skills and vocational literacy. Therefore, teachers should not just teach according to fixed teaching materials, but should flexibly design the curriculum according to the vocational requirements and enterprise needs, challenge the educational and teaching contents at any time, and carry out diversified teaching activities to promote students' acquisition of knowledge and accumulation of practical skills.

4.2 Enhancement of students' comprehensive abilities

4.2.1 Accurate positioning and enhancement of career planning ability

It is especially important to have a clear understanding and positioning of oneself. That is to say, we should recognize ourselves objectively and comprehensively, and fully understand our career interests, ability structure, professional values, behavioral styles, our strengths and weaknesses, etc. We can ask a few "what" questions. One is what we like to do to find our own career interests; the second is what we can do to detect our own mastery of certain vocational skills; the third is the most important thing, what are our professional values; the fourth is what we are suitable for combined with personal characteristics and accurate positioning.

4.2.2 Strengthening the learning of basic knowledge and professional skills

Having solid basic knowledge and strong professional skills is the best way to enter a professional career. Therefore, during the school period, building knowledge and theoretical system, learning a good skill are the essence of the work of students.

5 Conclusion

From the introduction of the *Decision* so far, the development of vocational education in China has made great progress, modern vocational education has also taken on a new look, the training of high-level skills in China has laid a solid theoretical foundation. At the same time, China's vocational education also faces new characteristics and more challenges. Schools, students, classrooms, families, enterprises in all aspects should be quickly adapted to the new changes brought by the great challenges.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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