

An Exploration of Career Development Education in Higher Vocational Colleges and Universities

ZHENG Xiao^{[a],*}

^[a] Lecturer of Chongqing Industry Polytechnic College, Chongqing, China.

*Corresponding author.

Received 3 November 2023; accepted 16 December 2023

Published online 26 December 2023

Abstract

With the intensification of competition in the job market and the increase of the demand for talents, college students also have more personalized development needs, and career development education has become an important educational content. Higher vocational colleges and universities are also actively exploring reforms in career development education, but there are still some limitations in the curriculum system, the construction of faculty and the improvement of students' self-awareness, etc. In this paper, the author will analyze the problems of career development education in higher vocational colleges and universities and their causes and put forward corresponding countermeasures to effectively promote career development education in higher vocational colleges and universities.

Key words: Higher vocational colleges and universities; Career education; Countermeasures

Zheng, X. (2023). An Exploration of Career Development Education in Higher Vocational Colleges and Universities. *Canadian Social Science*, 19(6), 74-78. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/13276>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/13276>

1. INTRODUCTION

With the deepening of industry-education integration and school-enterprise cooperation among various specialties in higher vocational colleges and universities, the future career direction and development of students are more

dependent on the specialties, and the career development goals of students are clearer. After years of exploration and efforts, career development education in higher vocational colleges and universities has also played an important role in guiding students to become successful and improve their employment competitiveness, but there are still some limitations in the curriculum system, the construction of faculty and the improvement of students' self-awareness, etc. Meanwhile, with the rapid progress of science and technology, intensified competition in the job market and increased demand for talents, college students also have more personalized development needs. In this context, a more comprehensive career education for students can not only promote the long-term development of students, but also improve the quality of school education and effectively alleviate the pressure of employment.

2. PROBLEMS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION IN HIGHER VOCATIONAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

2.1 Lagging curriculum system

In the first place, the curriculum tends to be oriented towards employment guidance, and course arrangements are not uniform. The notice of the General Office of the Ministry of Education on the issuance of the Teaching Requirements for College Students' Career Development and Employment Guidance Courses (JGT [2007] No. 7) proposes that colleges and universities design the curriculum system of employment guidance according to the actual situation in conjunction with the cultivation objectives for their own students, and stipulates the minimum class hour requirements. It can be in the form of one course covering the whole college process; two courses of Career and Development Planning and Employment Guidance; or three courses of Career and Development Planning, Career Literacy Enhancement

and Employment Guidance. Most of the higher vocational colleges and universities offer the courses in the first form and at different times, mostly focusing on the second and third years. Those that offer two courses are generally concentrated in the first and second years, and due to the varying levels of teacher qualifications, it is also common to repeat the teaching content and only offer employment guidance. Secondly, there is still a lack of more authoritative teaching materials for higher vocational colleges and universities with contents more in line with the characteristics of instructed students. Thirdly, the courses are in a single form. The course arrangement is mostly focused on theoretical courses, and some schools will combine lectures with theoretical courses, but there are very few practical courses, low integration of the courses with professional education, few information resources for the courses, and poor practice of the courses.

2.2 Unprofessional faculty

First and foremost, there is no fixed teaching team and a lack of professional teachers. Career development education in higher vocational colleges and universities seldom set up special teaching and research departments, and most of them are located in the quality course teaching and research departments of the College of Marxism, College of Liberal Studies, College of Innovation and Entrepreneurship and other colleges, and some are set up in the Admission and Employment Office, so there is an obvious shortage of teaching staff, and there are more part-time teachers. There is also insufficient strength in the management, guidance, supervision and assessment of teaching. Secondly, there is a lack of professional and systematic training. Career development education is a course with comprehensive subject knowledge, which requires teachers to be familiar with relevant career theory knowledge, career counseling tools, national employment policies, social and industrial demand development, etc. Schools attach uneven importance to teacher training, with insufficient funding and generally insufficient training efforts. Some colleges and universities have sufficient funds, but most part-time teachers do not attach importance to the course and are not highly motivated to participate in the training. In general, the popularity of professional certificates of career planning is still not high, and the professional quality needs to be upgraded urgently.

2.3 Inadequate self-awareness and development of students

To begin with, students' comprehensive quality is low and their sense of active exploration is not strong. There are relatively more students in higher vocational colleges and universities who have poor families, learning difficulties, and lack of learning goals. The initiative and self-consciousness of learning are poor, the degree of self-awareness is low, and the sense of self-efficacy is insufficient. Secondly, students' awareness of development planning is insufficient. Students in higher vocational

colleges and universities generally lack awareness of career planning, and are mostly influenced by their parents or popular majors on the Internet in their choice of majors, do not have an in-depth understanding of industry and enterprises, do not have an in-depth understanding of their majors when they enter the school, seldom think about employment, have a perfunctory attitude towards career education courses, do not make use of the knowledge they have learned to carry out planning, and leave their jobs frequently when they enter the workplace.

3. ANALYSIS OF CAUSES OF EXISTING PROBLEMS

3.1 Insufficient attention by schools

Initially, the understanding is not in place. Schools, with their understanding of career development education stuck in the pure employment guidance level and no deep understanding of the teaching objectives of the course, pay more attention to the employment results, and ignore the pre-career counseling process, so the curriculum is relatively simple and random, and there is no scientific and systematic design and planning, resulting in disconnection between the course teaching and the actual employment of students. Secondly, the target is not strong. The career development education has no clear goal, lacks effective integration with professional education, and does not play a due role in promoting the targeted training of talents needed by the industry in higher vocational colleges and universities. The status of career education courses is marginalized. Thirdly, the innovation is not strong enough. The teaching content and teaching methods of the course are relatively traditional, lacking new ideas and new ways, teachers are not committed to the course, and students' satisfaction with the course is not high, which directly affects the teaching effect.

3.2 Unsound safeguard and incentive mechanisms

First, there is a lack of a stable mechanism for securing faculty, and teachers do not have a sense of belonging to the team and lack a sense of identity with the curriculum.

Teachers of career development education are mostly composed of many categories of teachers such as ideology and politics teachers, general education course teachers, counselors, employment staff, school administrators, etc. Teachers' mobility is large and the number of staff is also relatively large, making it difficult to organize teaching and research activities. Most schools do not regularly organize teaching and research activities in accordance with the teaching requirements, and the effect of the activities carried out is not satisfactory. Teachers have a lower sense of recognition of the professionalism of the courses, and most of them are only to meet the requirements of the class hours or the need to confer academic titles. Secondly, there is a lack of strong incentives for teachers,

and teachers' willingness to take the initiative to improve is not strong. Considering schools do not have special incentives for employment guidance teachers to participate in title assessment, grade promotion, etc., coupled with the majority of part-time teachers, most teachers are more willing to carry out teaching and research in their own specialties, and only a small number of counselors are willing to take career education as the direction of enhancing personal teaching and research capacity due to their similar work or major. The majority of teachers lack theoretical knowledge and practical experience, and the curriculum development is relatively slow.

3.3 Neglect of students' subjectivity

Firstly, the emphasis is on education and sermonizing, but not on supportive guidance. Schools are more to provide students with information, explain policies, and provide ideological and political education, while students accept them passively acceptance, and even have resistance. Especially in the second and third years, they start to learn the relevant courses, the curriculum emphasizes employment skills and employment concepts, and students are often only concerned about the resumes and interviews, and lack sufficient attention and understanding to the environmental cognition and self-awareness. Schools have not done enough to pay attention to students' development and individual needs, and to stimulate students' career awareness and sense of subjectivity since students entered the school. Students should be the subject of career planning, while schools and teachers should be auxiliary, help and serve students to establish career planning awareness, and improve initiative and action. Secondly, the emphasis is on theoretical skills, instead of practical experience. Course teaching, employment guidance lectures, theme class meetings, etc., as the main channels of career education, are mostly theoretical and book knowledge teaching and inculcation, or direct guidance of conceptual value. The form of counseling is single and mere formality, and students do not absorb and understand much. Some activities that pay more attention to students' experience are not carried out enough, such as career group counseling, career activity experience, and career games. The lack of interaction and practice does not allow students to understand society and career in real environment and experience, which is not conducive to the cultivation of students' career interest, career ability and career values.

4. EXPLORING IDEAS FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION IN HIGHER VOCATIONAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

4.1 Construction of a three-dimensional career development education curriculum system

First, the first classroom is the main position to consolidate the knowledge base of students' career

planning. Systematic theoretical learning is the most direct and effective way to master a subject. Although there are some lectures on the course of career planning in secondary schools, most students still come to know and understand this course during their time in university. Classroom teaching is the most widely accessible and ensures that every student is engaged in learning, so it still plays a central educational role. Ways to do a good job of teaching in the first classroom include: a) Scientifically set the time and number of course offerings. Most colleges and universities tend to offer Career and Development Planning (16 hours) in the first semester of the freshman year, Career Guidance (16 hours) in the second semester of the sophomore year, and employment lectures in the first semester of the junior year. Schools with good conditions can also set up courses such as "Career Literacy Enhancement" and "Workplace Adaptation and Development". Career planning education is conducted at the beginning of admission to help students establish career development awareness and formulate development goals and academic planning, which helps students better adapt to university life and build up learning confidence. Learning about career guidance before job hunting in junior year can help students prepare for job hunting in advance and adjust their employment mindset. b) Unify curriculum standards and strengthen teaching and research and teaching. Choose excellent teaching materials that are more in line with the characteristics of higher vocational colleges and universities, or organize outstanding career teachers on campus to write special teaching materials. Develop the school's course syllabus in combination with the school's nurturing goals and the educational objectives of the course, focus on the integration with professional education, and reflect the characteristics of vocational education. Strengthen the management of the teaching team through centralized lesson preparation, collective development of teaching resources, and rotation of listening to lessons. By declaring scientific research and teaching reform projects, comprehensively carrying out training in teaching career planning, organizing competitions for teaching ability in career guidance courses, recommending teachers to go to enterprises for on-the-job training, and recommending teachers to participate in on-campus and off-campus individual career counseling or lectures, etc., schools can enhance the teaching and research ability of teachers, provide a platform for teachers' growth, cultivate and build famous teachers, and drive and enhance the awareness of the teachers' initiative to grow.

Secondly, the second classroom serves as an aid to carry out special activities to stimulate students' career planning action. The construction of the second classroom in each school is closely centered on the fundamental task of establishing moral education in colleges and universities, serving the goal of schools to cultivate high-quality technical and skilled talents, and

practically following the law of talent cultivation and the characteristics of college students' growth and success to build a set of comprehensive quality enhancement system. There are the following ways to play the role of the second classroom: a) Strengthen the overall design and effectively build the second classroom employment guidance system. Through the second classroom, employment guidance is carried out in a timely, multi-channel and all-round way to help college students establish a correct view of employment and comprehensively improve their comprehensive quality and employment competitiveness. According to the characteristics of each stage of students' career, schools can connect the knowledge and courses related to college students' career education and employment guidance with the sections of "Craftsmanship Cultivation", "Social Work and Leadership", "Vocational Skills Practice", etc. in the second classroom, which serves as a mandatory part of the second class to provide students with the contents of learning and practicing such as awakening of career consciousness, career assessment and self-exploration, exploration of the career world, job-seeking skills enhancement, and psychological debugging for employment. b) Strengthen the linkage and create high-quality characteristic activities. School employment departments should be actively linked with the school youth league committee and other departments to organize and plan "career guidance camp", "career experience week" and other high-quality characteristic activities, which should be incorporated into the second classroom high-quality project library. From the employment situation to career planning, from job search preparation to interview strategy, from career orientation to adaption to the workplace, from career orientation to workplace adaptation, the classroom covers the whole process of students' career development. Through the coordinated allocation of quality resources, schools can create a variety of forms and content-rich boutique projects, give full play to the role of the second classroom to realize the whole process and all-round employment guidance and form a synergy of work.

Moreover, the integration of industry and education as a carrier to build a vocational experience platform to strengthen students' knowledge of the occupation. The decision of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Accelerating the Transformation of Modern Vocational Education ([2014] No. 19) clearly stipulates that "combining industry and education, and running schools with special characteristics" is the basic principle of vocational education transformation. Due to the natural connection between vocational education and industry, schools and enterprises must take the road of cooperation and integration in improving the quality of technical personnel training. The integration of industry and education can boost students' employment, and the improvement of technical skills can also enhance students' sense of self-efficacy. Some provinces have

created provincial vocational experience centers relying on the integration centers to deepen the integration of vocational education and universities, school-enterprise cooperation, and production and education by linking up with benchmark enterprises, scientific research institutes, and vocational colleges in the industrial field, constructing training bases, and carrying out vocational experience activities, so as to further speed up the linkage and integration of the two sides of production and education in technological innovation, supply of talents, and transformation of achievements. The vocational experience center is a good carrier for vocational experience, as it allows students to go from "theory" to "practical training" and then to "combat" by means of visiting experience and on-site teaching. Schools can also rely on on-campus industry-teaching integration resources to build a regular career experience platform, promote the construction of career experience practice bases, set up a certain number of hours of vocational practice courses, combine on-campus internship training and workplace internship for students to contact front-line positions or experience related work for a certain period of time, and hire enterprise mentors to lead students to complete vocational exploration activities, so as to deepen the students' knowledge of positions and careers.

4.2 Strengthening of career planning instructor teams

The first is to build a stable teaching management system. Colleges and universities can build a management structure for career education that meets the actual situation of the institutions according to its financial resources, student size and target orientation, set up independent teaching and research departments as far as possible, or designate specialists as the person in charge of course construction to be fully responsible for course construction and teaching work. Establish and improve the assessment and incentive mechanism for teachers of career development education courses, including qualification, team mobility, evaluation and incentives, to improve the stability of the teaching team, and to select more teachers with good basic knowledge in psychology, human resource management and other specialties or with enterprise work experience to teach, so as to increase the proportion of "professional" teachers.

Additionally, the training of teachers in specialization, expertization and vocationalization should be strengthened. Investing in a professional qualification access mechanism is fundamental to ensuring the level of teachers. All teachers should be regularly organized to participate in career theory, career counseling, employment guidance and other business training, and obtain qualification certificates such as career instructor, career planner and career coach. Outstanding teachers are selected to participate in in-depth study and training and individual student counseling and tutoring to accumulate

guidance experience and improve the level of guidance.

The third is to build a full-time and part-time faculty with strong specialization and multiple synergies. Career education covers a wide range of fields and specialties, and course teachers alone are not enough to handle all career education work. Resources such as professional teachers and enterprise experts should be fully absorbed through the integration of industry and education resources to form a school career guidance expert pool, and off-campus career guidance experts, college scholars, professional backbone teachers, senior industry experts, outstanding alumni, etc. should be invited to the school to carry out training and guidance, so as to enrich the students' cognition and realization of their careers.

4.3 Personalized career counseling for leading students to growth and success

Initially, efforts are made to build characteristic career counseling studios. The Ministry of Education has carried out the construction of characteristic career counseling studios for colleges and universities in 2022, aiming to focus on supporting a group of colleges and universities with the conditions to create a number of characteristic career counseling studios, give full play to the role of demonstration, promote colleges and universities around China to strengthen the conditions of protection and the construction of faculty, and carry out precise, personalized, high-quality career education guidance service activities. Colleges and universities can rely on this work to start forming professional teams and building career counseling studios that conforms with the characteristics of their own schools. For example, the four-leaf clover career counseling studio of Jinhua Vocational and Technical College has been selected as the national college career characteristic counseling studio this year. The construction of career counseling studios can rely on professional teachers to provide teachers and students with individual counseling, group counseling, career assessment and other precise and personalized career counseling, expand the length and breadth of career counseling, better meet the personalized needs of the students' career development, enhance the competitiveness of the students' workplace and comprehensive literacy, improve the young teachers' career internal driving force, and pay attention to the lifelong career development of the teachers and students.

Besides, colleges and universities are actively promoting experiential career group counseling activities. Although individual counseling is more precise, its coverage is still limited, and group counseling can be a useful supplement to individual counseling. Experiential

career planning counseling activities based on the group dynamics, can set up a rich theme. Through the game experience, situational experience, practical experience method, the theory and practice, learning and application can be closely combined to better stimulate students' introspection consciousness and interest in learning, and finally transformed into a conscious force of action, which can gradually be extended to the process of self-management. This group counseling mode, which integrates experience, sharing, action and reflection, is more likely to awaken students' career awareness and help solve the problem of insufficient internal driving force and lack of initiative.

5. CONCLUSION

In summary, in the face of the new situation, the career development education work of higher vocational colleges and universities must be combined with the national situation and social conditions and deep understanding of the students' internal needs. It should serve the moral education, promote the whole person development and quality improvement, help college students establish a scientific concept of employment, establish the awareness of career planning and development, cultivate a positive employment mentality, improve the ability of career planning, and take the initiative to construct their future life.

REFERENCES

- Fan, F. M. (2017). *Structured Group Counseling and Counseling Application Examples*. Beijing, China: Higher Education Press.
- Ji, M. G. (2020). Research on the Status Quo of Career Development Education for Higher Vocational Students. *Journal of Zhengzhou Railway Vocational and Technical College*, 32(4), 62-65.
- Luo, D., & Tang, D. (2022). Exploring the Construction of Higher Vocational Career Education System Under Sustainable Development. *Education Teaching Forum*, 5(21), 181-184.
- Ministry of Education of China. (2007). *Teaching Requirements for College Students' Career Development and Employment Guidance Courses (JGT (2007) No.7)*.
- Wang, Q. Z. (2020). Research on the Practice of Teachers' Career Development Management in Liaoning Higher Vocational Colleges and Universities. *Liaoning Journal of Higher Vocational Education*, 24(5), 97-100.