

An Outlook of the Work-Study Program for Chineses College Students from the Perspective of Times

LA PERSPECTIVE DE PROGRAMME TRAVAIL-ETUDES DU POINT DE VUE DE NOTRE EPOQUE

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Abstract: The poverty student's work is an important part in constructing a harmonious campus. How to make the best use of the work-study program requires us to view the issue from a long-term perspective. The article presents briefly the change and development of the connotation, object and subject of the program through an analysis of the history, current situation and future development of the work-study program. "Helping students out of poverty, providing them with good education and helping them grow into useful people" is a main theme that is in line with the development of times.

Key words: work for study; epochal; education; outlook

Résumé: L'aide aux étudiants pauvres est une composante importante de la construction d'une école supérieure harmonieuse. Pour rendre le programme travail-études plus actif, il faut aborder ce sujet avec une vision de l'époque. En analysant les réformes historiques, la situation actuelle et la tendance future, cet article présente le concept du programme travail-études, les transformations et les développement de l'objet et du sujet. "L'aide aux pauvres, la formation des talents et des hommes utiles" seront le thème principal qui correspond au développement de l'époque.

Mots-Clés: le programme travail-études; l'époque ; la formation des hommes utiles; la perspective

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1. THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORK-STUDY TRADITION IN CHINA

Origin of the work-study program: work-study is not a strange thing for most of us. The combination of work and study and the program of work-study are good traditions in the education development of China. The ancient professional education was in the form of apprenticeship, modern professional education also stresses the importance of combining work and study. Looking back to the history, the records of this kind of moving deeds were numerous. One such example is found in *Three Character Primer*: “reading the book hanged on the carried firewood, reading the book hanged at the pastured cattle’s horns; exhausting as it is, it is well deserved”. “Reading the book hanged on the carried firewood” was a story of ZHU Mai-cheng in Han Dynasty. His family was utterly destitute and he earned a living by collecting firewood. Though he was eager to study, he could not afford it; so he studied while working. When collecting the firewood on the mountain, he managed to find some time to read books, and when carrying the firewood home, he hanged a book on the firewood and read it. Similarly, “reading the book hanged at the pastured cattle’s horns” was a story of LI Mi in Sui Dynasty. He had to pasture cattle for others for he could not afford the tuition. He always read the *History of the Han Dynasty* on the back of cattle and hanged his other books at the cattle’s horns.

Throughout Chinese history, there were three representative work–study peaks, and each of them played a positive role in the specific history.

1.1 The First Peak: work-study activities practiced by Chinese students residing in Europe at the beginning of last century

As the worldwide democratic revolution emerged, the work-study educational form appeared in line with the times. Students worked for their study. A great number of brilliant men of China, such as the elder revolutionists ZHOU En-lai, DENG Xiao-ping, CAI He-sen, and the like, used to work through their studies in Europe. In 1909, LI Shi founded a bean product company in Paris and employed over 30 people from China. They worked in daytime and studied at night. And they put forward the slogan of “work for study” and integrated work with study. In 1914, LI Guang-an and some other people changed the slogan “work for study” into “hard work and thrifty life, all for the study”. In June, 1915, CAI Yuan-pei, LI Shi-zeng and WU Yuzhang established a Work-for-Study Association in France, and clearly put forward a goal of “hard work and thrifty life, all for the study and for the increase of workers’ knowledge”. In the spring of 1916, some Chinese and French people founded the Sino-French Education Association in France, and CAI Yuan-pei held the office of Chinese director and LI Shi-zeng held the office of secretary. The headquarters were in Beijing, China, and branches spread in Guangdong and Shanghai. They attracted idealistic young people to do part-time jobs to support their learning in France; meanwhile they founded a work-study association in France for promotion, which was aimed at studying western advanced civilization and scientific technologies to enrich China and strengthen its military forces. The work-study movement had had a deep impact on Chinese education. By 1920, The Chinese students who studied in France totaled around 1,600.

1.2 Work-study activities in early days of the foundation of P.R.C.

On May 5, 1957, Comrade LIU Shao-qi, published an article titled *Advocate Work-study and Conduct Extracurricular Activities* as an editorial in the newspaper *China Youth News*. The article greatly promoted the work-study activities of the young students at that time. On May 30, 1958, LIU Shao-qi proposed to establish a work-study school educational system and factory working system in the Political Bureau Enlarged Conference. The system was intended to integrate theory and practice and to

strengthen the cooperation between the intellectuals and the workers. Indeed the system received good results. The young students formed the working habit and were incorporated into production work. All in all, the system provided students with an opportunity to practice while at the same time saved funds for the country and the school. In addition, the practice of the system provided precious experience for schooling policy during the special time.

1.3 A New Situation of Work-study since Reform and Opening up

Under the new situation of reform and opening up, particularly influenced by the reform of education system and the deepening of social market economy, we had a new understanding of creating modern college students' personality and the means of helping them grow through work-study activities; the students' awareness of self-reliance and their hope to experience the society became increasingly urgent. To help students grow into all-rounded person through work-study program became the goal pursued by college student themselves and the state as well. Under such background, the program of work-study was oriented more towards helping student grow into all-rounded person than developing the economy.

During the development of this stage, the work-study center of Shanghai Jiao Tong University was typical and significant. The center was named the Only and was the earliest work-study center across the country. As the center was founded in 1984 and was the first college student work-study center of China, it was named Only. The center mainly offered work-study internship jobs to college students who have financial problems; it was an educational group specified in professional education and training. The well-known brand Only No.1 was originated from the center.

2. MAIN PROBLEMS EXISTING IN THE WORK-STUDY PROGRAM

2.1. Some misunderstandings of work-study program

The misunderstandings of work-study program come from both the students and the society. On one hand, the work-for-study program, as an efficient measure to solve students' financial problems, has been widely promoted in colleges and has granted substantial preferential policies and economic support to the poverty-stricken students, which makes some of the students believe that the program is only a matter of form; the real purpose of the program is to offer them subsidies. Such beliefs confused their understanding of the significance and purpose of the program; quite some students are only willing to take jobs which cost little while earning much or some kind of simple jobs and unwilling to take jobs which are challenging; they put money in the first place. Some other students have high self-esteem, unwilling to let the teachers and students know that they have economic problems, they are reluctant to take positions in work-study programs, regarding it as a kind of losing-face. On the other hand, the society and some of the teachers do not have a correct understanding of the work-study program. They do not trust the college student in carrying out realistic work; they believe that students should perform well in their studies and that is enough, and they never understand and promote the work-study program from the height of "helping students out of poverty, providing them with good education and helping them grow into useful people". Thus the development of the work-study program is limited. In addition, some other people use the students as migrant workers and greatly exploit them by making use of their desire to participate in social practice.

2.2 the work-study job positions can not meet college students' needs

The problem that the work-study job positions are not enough to satisfy everyone is common and urgent to be solved. At present, the number of college students is quite large and the number of poverty-stricken

students increases greatly, which creates an increasing need for work-study job positions. Since one college can only offer a limited number of job positions, it can only ensure those students who need the positions mostly get the job and thus can not essentially meet the needs of the rest of students; wherein, the in-campus jobs are basically offered by the schools and functional departments of the college, and very few are provided by the work-study program; although the job market outside the school is large, schools can not get in-time information due to the lack of information-exchange platform. Thus many colleges do nothing but wait; they lack the initiative to make use of the large market outside. In addition, students also have some subjective problems during the process of working, resulting in the loss of outside bases or terminal of cooperation.

2.3 Fund problem affects the healthy development of the work-study program

The state ministries of education and finance have made it clear that colleges and universities should provide fund for work-for-study programs, ([1994] No. 35 document from the state ministries of education and finance), to ensure that work-study activities in colleges and universities have stable and reliable fund sources. The funds mainly come from four sources: firstly, from the operating expenses of education; the second source is 5% fund transferred from the tuition income; the third source is the income that is not counted in the college's budget; and the fourth source is the foundation added values. In 1997, the state once again made it clear in document, ([1997] No.7 document from the state ministries of education and finance), 10% of the tuition should be granted for the work-for-study program. Taking a college with a 10,000 students as an example, the fund should be RMB 5 million annually (RMB 5,000 tuition*10%*10,000 students), which is quite inspiring. The reality is that schools with limited financial resources find it hard to implement this measure; the majority of schools can not provide 10% of tuition fees as the funding for work-study program, even with the reduced tuition and subsidies included. Furthermore, the use of the work-for-study funds lack reasonable planning; many colleges spend the funds totally in some low-level and labor-intensive subsidiary jobs, which are set purely for granting students some financial support without any real significance. Due to the wrong way of input as well as the shortage of capital, the propulsive effect of the work-for-study program could not be expected and the function of "producing blood" thereof was limited.

2.4 The job positions in the work-for-study program is low-leveled

The work-for-study program for college students should be multiple-leveled and comprehensive, but currently, many college work-for-study jobs remain at a low-level, providing mainly labor-costing and service jobs. Up to now, some colleges still consider the work-for-study program as a purely poverty-reduction measure, resulting in a series of problems that inhibit the development of the work-for-study program: the starting point is low, the job positions are at a low level and the jobs are of a monotonous kind of characteristic. For instance, the jobs available in many colleges are always monotonous and boring, such as maintaining school cafeteria order, patrolling for campus security, arranging library books and even cleaning the classrooms. Intellectual and technical jobs are rarely available. Therefore the majority of college students can not get suitable jobs. Nowadays, work as a home tutor is counted as a higher-level and high-income job. But all of these work-for-study jobs do not require professional skills, and thus can hardly integrate the students' professional study, their training in academics and their self-growth and embody the college students' due values.

3. OUTLOOK OF THE DEVELOPMENT ORIENTATION OF THE WORK-FOR-STUDY PROGRAM

3.1 The Work-for-study program should have distinct characteristics of times

Trough the analysis of the work-for-study program at different stages, we can clearly feel the time track of the history, reflecting on the meaning and value of the work-for-study program at different stages.

Either the apprenticeship for earning a living or the three representative work-for-study peaks is closely related to the living standard, social environment and the destiny of the country at that time. Firstly, as college education transforms from elite education into mass education, the main body and scope of the work-for-study program should be enlarged to include all the students instead of poverty-stricken students. Due to the reform of college tuition system, a lot of students are shouldering a heavy economic burden; they need to work part time through their college study. But most job positions in work-study programs are aimed at poverty students, leaving only a few positions to the rest of students. Nowadays as more and more students join in the work-study program, the targeting subjects of work-study program are gradually covering all the students. Secondly, The Market economy and opening up require people to step into society more urgently and college students are no exception. This is the requirement of the development of our society. Thirdly, the concept and assumption that the work-study program is mainly for economic purpose and purely for helping students out of poverty is now changing. The significance of supporting learning is becoming deeper and broader; working for financial support so as to afford studying is not consistent with the requirements of the modern college training goals. In addition to economic rewards, students should also learn outside-classroom knowledge, skills, abilities etc. to realize the ultimate goal of growing into somebody!

3.2 " Helping students out of poverty, providing them with good education and helping them grow into useful people "

This direction greatly expands the current work-study content. First of all, helping poor students solve their economic difficulties is becoming the basis of work-study in the future; Secondly, we widen the meaning of the program either on the program object, content, method and way, or the program efficiency and target. The program has been a platform of college student quality education, and the education is its key goal. Thirdly, the program is in line with our education objectives; the program will be vigorously developed as an important means of college training. The change of the economic system and college system reforms brought to us let universities and colleges fully realize that we must train multi-quality talent to keep in line with our social development and explore more efficient ways. The multi-level, quasi-all-round practice and measures of schools can make up for shortcomings and gaps of a group of students, and continuously enhance their skills and establish their confidence; for some psychological burdened students, the work-for-study program can exhibit their values and inspire their spirits; for some senior students with certain professional background, the program can totally integrate their professional knowledge with real-world practice, offering them an opportunity for rehearsal before working as true professionals; the program can cultivate students' awareness of teamwork and the sense of social responsibility. In short, the program has its own advantages and characteristics, which will promote greatly the development of the program as an important means for training students and realize the ultimate goal of all-round development of students.

3.3 The work-for-study program is increasingly connected with student's professional knowledge

The first essential change of the work-for-study program is its integration with the profession. It is an absolute development of the times and an embodiment of the multiple value of the program and the maximization of the market. The program's requirements of knowledge and skills help the students incorporate what they have learned into practice and transform their perceptual knowledge into rational knowledge through learning by doing. And when students apply their professional knowledge into the work-for-study jobs, they may realize the true values of the knowledge they have learned, which helps deepen their understanding of the professional knowledge and stimulate their enthusiasm for further study. It also helps them develop their problem analyzing and solving abilities, and strengthen their innovative ability. The appearance of professional work-for-study jobs and the strong desire of the students reflect a new development orientation of the program; it also tests the service awareness and ability of universities and colleges, especially those of the secondary level. And the support and study aid awareness of professors are decisive forces for boosting the development of the work-for-study program in a professional direction. Hence, from the aspect of the development of times, the colleges should fully

simulate the enthusiasm of the schools and teachers.

3.4 The integration of the Work-for-study program with student's internship and practice

Due to the society's requirement of practical working ability of the college students and college student's desire for participating in high-level work-for-study job positions, it is possible for the work-study program to be integrated with student's social practice. The students can not only earn money but also improve their professional skills and social abilities.

To participate in internships and social practices with pay is a supplementation and improvement of college student's academic study in classroom. Through experiencing in person, college students deeply realize what the society requires, what their own advantages and defects are and what are the current situation of social production and technology development so as to timely adjust and plan their own study aims and priorities, strengthen their study enthusiasm and improve efficiency. In addition, the practical activities can help the students contact and understand the society comprehensively, enhance their social communication and activity abilities, and train their coordination and problem-solving abilities. Therefore, universities and colleges should not only develop out-campus work-for-study jobs but also focus on the cooperation with enterprises and vigorously establish internship bases for college students, creating conditions for students to adapt into the society as soon as possible and improve their qualities. Not long ago, Shanghai University of Science and Technology, by cooperating with of a dozen of private enterprises, offers over 100 internship opportunities for its students who have financial problem. By doing so, the school not only solved students' financial problems but also offered them the opportunity to experience the society. At the same time, such a program also provided the private enterprises with professional technologies and management experience, which is good for their development; thus the program led into a win-win situation.

3.5 The Work-for-study program lays a foundation for graduate students in their career development

The goal of college education is to train more skilled talents. As more students nowadays are given the opportunity to receive college education, the job competition is becoming more intense among college students. The work-for-study program provides a transition zone for alleviating the contradiction and it is an effective means to guide the students to figure out their job priority and plan their career development as soon as possible.

As the work-for-study activities become increasingly popular among college students on and off campus, students will realize the cruelty of competition and experience the principle of "survival of the best". Such a process is a good opportunity for universities and colleges to guide their students to understand the employment concepts, raise their employment awareness and prepare for the employment in advance. During the process of the work-for-study program, students can understand the specific needs of professionals in different sectors of society, and the professional knowledge structures and technical skills required by different enterprise. As a result, students will have a clearing picture of the nature of different enterprises and broaden their vision in employment; it is particularly beneficial for senior students; they can communicate with the enterprises through professional work-for-study programs, establishing mutual trust and two-way choice relationships with the enterprises and widen their employment channels.

The ultimate goal of colleges and universities is not only to help students find good jobs but also to produce a group of entrepreneurial graduates. Off-campus work-study programs can help students learn more about the distribution of social resources, industry distribution and development, market access and other aspects of knowledge; they also help students improve their ability to resist risks and learn to analyze the market in order to help them establish business minds and business confidence. Moreover, the on-campus work-for-study bases as well as entity constructions and operations give the students opportunities for real practicing. By offering students opportunities to work as shopkeepers, accountants,

salesmen and technical directors, the program helps students plan and design their careers, showing its powerful function of education.

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