

## Research on Strengthening Dormitory Labor Education of College Students in the New Era

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### Abstract

Dormitory plays a crucial role in labor education as it is the place where students are intensively engaged in labor. In carrying out labor education work, there are still difficulties such as college students' lack of attention to labor education, separation of labor and education, and difficulty in quantifying the results of labor education.

**Key words:** Dormitory; College students; Labor education

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As pointed out in *Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Universities, Middle Schools, and Primary Schools in the New Era* issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council<sup>1</sup>, "schools should play the leading role in labor education." As the main place where college students carry out their daily life and labor work, it functions as the smallest unit of colleges' and universities' implementation of using practice as the teaching tool and plays an important role in the labor education among college students. A thorough implementation of the

<sup>1</sup> Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Universities, Middle Schools and Primary Schools in the New Era. (2020, March 37). People's Daily, p. 01

dormitory labor education functions as significant and practical guidance for promoting the construction of labor education curriculum, expanding the site for labor education practice, strengthening the labor education team, and coordinating the labor education dimension in colleges and universities.

### 1. THE DIFFICULTIES OF STRENGTHENING DORMITORY LABOR EDUCATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE NEW ERA

College students are the main body of labor education, which is an important part of overall education and one of the paths towards practicing the fundamental task of establishing moral integrity in cultivation. Nowadays, strengthening dormitory labor education of college students in the new era is faced with a number of difficulties, mainly college students' lack of attention to labor education, valuing academic education over labor, and difficulty in quantifying the results of labor education.

#### 1.1 College Students' Lack of Attention to Labor Education

The new generation of college students are mostly born after 2000 and have never experienced material scarcity. There has developed a common phenomenon among college students that neither do they want to be engaged in labor nor do they not know how to. They will not actively conduct labor, and they do not have the consciousness of discovering and carrying out labor actively by participating in various labor activities at home, school, and society. Moreover, they do not have the ability to participate in labor, and when they do carry out labor activities, they are unable to exert their ability in labor activities because of the lack of basic skills. In the long run, it also leads to the vicious cycle of college students' not wanting to work and being confined to the status quo.

## 1.2 Separation of Labor and Education

The concept of “those who labor their brains rule others and those who labor their bodies are ruled by others” has rooted in Chinese education. From parents, schools to society, there is a widespread phenomenon of attaching importance to students’ academic knowledge but neglecting the cultivation of labor ability. It is believed that those who engage in mental work are superior to others and can achieve success in their careers and life. At the same time, engaging in physical labor is often considered to be synonymous with lack of knowledge, disrespect, and inferiority in society.

Emphasis is placed on teaching rather than educating. The tendency to emphasize intellectual education and to neglect moral, physical, aesthetic, and labor education still exists in all levels of education in China, the phenomenon of which is especially prominent in less developed regions and post-graduate education. Before the state put forward the educational policy of giving equal importance to the five education areas of “morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics and labor”, labor education had been marginalized and neglected. For a long time, it had not been given enough attention and was absent from the general education system. The scarcity of educators’ awareness of strengthening labor education, colleges’ cultivation of students’ awareness to engage in labor, and the promotion of labor education has caused the current separation of labor and education. However, the process of education itself is the process of labor, and the process of labor also includes the process of education. The two should be mutually complementary and inseparable.

## 1.3 Difficulty in Quantifying the Results of Labor Education

Labor education is a type of general education for students of all levels, which focuses on cultivating students’ correct attitude towards labor, improving basic labor skills, and developing labor habits and appreciation for labor. (Wen & Ding, 2019) However, in the actual quantitative assessment, it is difficult to quantify the labor attitude established and the labor qualities developed among college students, which are comparably general and abstract. Labor education, as one of the five aspects of education, is often placed in the module of “Ideology and Morality” in the assessment of students. Simply by applying the item of “love of labor and good labor habits” in the assessment form, it is difficult to distinguish students’ participation in labor and labor skills, except for the general collective activities that usually involve all the students. In addition, the curricula set for labor education in colleges and universities are highly homogenized, and the labor modules which are generally included in physical education courses and common elective courses are still not enough for extensive labor education. The quantitative indicators of labor education are covered in other broader aspects, which makes it hard to attract the attention of most students.

According to their talent training programs and school characteristics, some colleges and universities have set up social responsibility credits, “secondary-class” transcript system, and revised comprehensive assessment methods for college students. These initiatives have, to a certain extent, probabilized the quantification of labor education and its results. However, most of the systems only give an overall score of the five modules of “moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor Education”, and the definition of the content of “labor education” is not very clear. As to the reasons, on the one hand, the work carried out by universities in labor education is still inadequate, and on the other hand, labor education, in its nature, is indeed difficult to quantify, for the results of labor education are typically reflected in the daily performance of college students and certain labor activities.

## 2. IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING DORMITORY LABOR EDUCATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE NEW ERA

The Communist Party of China’s understanding of China’s educational policy has been constantly evolving. As early as the founding of the People’s Republic of China, President Mao Zedong proposed, “Our educational policy should enable the people being educated to develop in several aspects: morality, intelligence, and physical fitness, in order for them to become educated laborers with socialist consciousness.” (Mao, 1957) In June 1999, the State Council of the Central Committee of CPC issued a decision on quality education, stating, “China shall develop builders and successors of the socialist cause with socialist ideals, morality, discipline, and well-rounded development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness and aesthetics.” On September 10, 2018, Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, first proposed, “China shall cultivate builders and successors of the socialist cause with all-round development of morality, intelligence, physical health, aesthetics, and labor.” The list of from what aspects should people be educated was enriched from morality, intelligence, and physical fitness to aesthetics and labor, the process of which fully reflected the great importance the CPC attaches to China’s education cause. In particular, the newly added dimension of labor education enriches the education policy in the new era and answers the questions of “for whom to educate,” “what is the purpose of education,” and “how to train people” in a more comprehensive and concrete manner. In the process of education, the inclusion of the whole population, the whole process, and the whole scenario is a necessity and an important step in the socialist education with Chinese characteristics.

Since the 18th Party Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly put forward important ideas,

perspectives, and judgment on labor education. In 2013, Xi Jinping pointed out that “labor is the fundamental driving force of the progress of human society.” In 2015, Xi Jinping again stressed that “we shall popularize the view that labor is the most glorious, the most grandeur, and the most beautiful.” General Secretary Xi Jinping has provided an ideological guide for carrying out labor education in terms of the importance of labor, what kind of labor view to establish, and what kind of labor competition to promote.

The dormitory is the main place for college students to develop labor habits, carry out labor activities and form labor intention. The advancement of higher education training mode and credit system reform has brought the widespread phenomenon of students being in the same class but different courses or being in the same course but having different schedules. Freshmen and sophomore students are having fewer and fewer courses where they are organized with classes and majors as units. Subsequently, college students enjoy more freedom to choose their schedule and course teachers, which helps dormitory members to form similar schedules and preferences in terms of courses, labor, contests, and so on. Therefore, the dormitory plays an important role in the labor education of college students in the new era.

### **2.1 Dormitory Is an Important Site of Labor Education**

The environment is featured by perceptibility, controllability, adaptability, and creatability and has a very strong influence on the growth and success of people. As the fixed place where college students have the longest activity time and the closest communication, the dormitory has a subtle influence on the shaping of students' labor view. If dormitory members enjoy a good sanitary environment, harmonious interpersonal relationships, and mutual help, the effectiveness of dormitory labor education will be doubled with half the effort. On the contrary, if the sanitary condition is poor, and dormitory members hold resentment against or indifference towards each other, it is difficult to carry out any educational activities in the dormitory successfully, let alone to achieve results. Labor education does not only happen in the classroom but more in daily life. It is even more so when it comes to the influence of the dormitory environment on the labor education of college students. If the overall dormitory environment is positive, with members having adequate life skills, good innovation, and practical ability, they will also have outstanding performance in daily life, productive labor, voluntary service, and social practice.

### **2.2 Dormitory Is an Important Carrier of Labor Education**

The classroom is the basic carrier for labor education,

student activities are the main form of labor education, and the dormitory is the important carrier for labor education. First, the dormitory is an important carrier for the development of good hygiene habits. As college students usually spend more than one-third of their school time in the dormitories, they need to develop good hygienic habits for both personal hygiene and the overall dormitory environment. Hygienic habits like regularly organizing daily necessities and personal belongings, changing clothes and taking showers are all formed in the dormitory. Second, the dormitory is an important carrier for developing labor skills. As a living space, it is inevitable for students to encounter situations where they need to use their hands, and the basic fixing skills can be formed through continuous practice. Third, the dormitory is also an important carrier for developing the habit of helping others. The dormitory should be an environment where members help each other. As dormitory members communicate with each other the most in daily life, their mutual assistance can help them form the good habit of loving the collective and serving others.

### **2.3 Dormitory Is an Important Incubator for All-round Development**

The dormitory is the place where college students experience the closest interpersonal interactions. The different characters and personalities of college students can form the closest emotional interaction in the dormitory, but can also lead to contradictions and conflicts. The dormitory is like a micro-society, and the experience in the dormitory has a profound impact on the overall development of college students. In this important space where self demonstration, ability improvement, and have overall development can be achieved, college students can improve their interpersonal skills, improve their perseverance in enduring hardship, and form the spirit of dedication, friendship, mutual help and progress through helping others.

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