

# Study on the Development Strategy of General Education Curriculum in Higher Vocational Education from the Perspective of "Whole Person Education"

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**Abstract:** Vocational general education courses belong to typical non utilitarian education, which can fully highlight the core idea of holistic education. However, due to the emphasis on practicality and effectiveness in vocational education, a large proportion of vocational colleges are unwilling to "wait for its effectiveness", which in turn leads to a unidirectional trend in the development of talents cultivated by vocational colleges. Therefore, under the guidance of the concept of "holistic education", vocational colleges should use the second classroom as a starting point to deeply explore the educational elements of general education courses, in order to comprehensively improve the comprehensive quality of vocational students and further strengthen the quality of talent cultivation in vocational education.

**Keywords:** Whole person education; Vocational colleges; General education courses; Development strategy

## 1. Introduction

Whole person education refers to "a new educational concept that emphasizes both social and human values, formed on the basis of integrating the two educational perspectives of 'putting society first' and 'putting people first'." [1] Whole person education is guided by the harmonious development of individuals, focusing on cultivating comprehensive talents with sound personality traits and a complete knowledge system, as well as a positive attitude towards life and correct values. As is well known, the main function of current vocational education is to continuously provide a large number of highly skilled talents and high-quality workers to society, in order to better promote industrial development and serve the local economy and society. This indicates that higher vocational education should also cultivate talents based on the concept of holistic education, continuously providing comprehensive technical and skilled talents with comprehensive development to society, rather than relying solely on one direction. Generally speaking, the core courses of vocational colleges can only teach vocational college students to have "high skills", because these courses are mainly characterized by "integration of production and learning" and "combination of engineering and learning". They focus on enabling students to master the professional knowledge and skills necessary for employment through professional or even vocational training. On the other hand, vocational general education courses can gradually equip vocational students with the "high quality" emphasized by holistic education, with the goal of enabling them to achieve "unity of knowledge and action" and "simultaneous cultivation of morality and technology". That is to say, while improving vocational students' skills, they should not neglect the cultivation of quality. From this, it can be seen that vocational general education courses have important research value, which can promote and promote the realization of holistic education.

## 2. Analysis of the Current Situation of General Education Courses in Vocational Colleges

General education courses in higher vocational education are generally relative to professional courses in higher vocational education. They are based on the concept of "general education" and involve the curriculum system in fields such as life, society, and ecology. [2] It is beneficial for enhancing the spiritual world of vocational college students, focusing on the quality development of vocational college students, helping to build a spiritual home for vocational college students, and promoting them to truly become adults mentally and psychologically, that is, to become the "whole

person" advocated by holistic education. Vocational general education courses are of great benefit to vocational students in forming excellent qualities, noble sentiments, elegant aesthetic taste, meticulous logical thinking, and healthy physical and psychological qualities. Therefore, they can not only strengthen students' individual freedom and comprehensive development, but also greatly promote the success rate of vocational students' future job hunting and stability after employment.

Although it has significant significance and value that cannot be underestimated, for many years, vocational general education courses have been in an extremely difficult and awkward context, facing a great survival crisis. This is because vocational education has always emphasized practicality and effectiveness, coupled with constraints such as academic system and class hours, which has led to a large proportion of vocational colleges directly ignoring the importance of general education courses for a long period of time, crudely compressing or even excluding such courses. Therefore, once vocational colleges need to make adjustments to talent cultivation plans or carry out teaching reforms, then. Most of the time, it's a general education course. Reduce the number of weekly class hours for general education courses as much as possible and compress the teaching cycle; The emphasis is on "cutting classes" and directly canceling the teaching settings of one or several general education courses. There are two main reasons for forming such a survival situation.

### ***2.1 Inconsistent with the concept of practicality and effectiveness upheld in vocational education***

General education courses belong to typical non utilitarian education, emphasizing the cultivation and improvement of students' humanistic and comprehensive qualities, which is manifested in the subtle growth and progress of students at the spiritual level. Therefore, it is difficult to demonstrate significant teaching results in a short period of time, and it is a form of education that "moistens things silently". However, the talent cultivation standards of vocational colleges have distinct practicality and sociality... (mainly) to cultivate technical and applied specialized talents that meet the needs of production, construction, management, and service frontline. "[3] Therefore, in order to continuously provide technical talents to society, vocational colleges urgently hope that their professional and technical training of students can be effective and have obvious teaching effects. Some vocational colleges expect their professional teaching results to be as immediate as "suddenly like a night of spring breeze, thousands of trees and pear blossoms", striving to enable students to quickly master a certain professional skill in the shortest possible time, and then rely on this skill to establish themselves in society and gain recognition from employers, in order to win a good reputation and good graduate employment rate for their vocational colleges.

Such a short-sighted talent cultivation goal makes vocational colleges completely disregard the importance of general education courses for students' comprehensive development, and also completely ignore the significance of general education for students' future job hunting and work. However, in reality, what is needed in today's society is no longer simply a "craftsman" with limited skills, but a fully developed technical and skilled talent with craftsmanship spirit, high quality and emotional intelligence. It should be pointed out that the cultivation of these qualities that today's technical and skilled talents need is precisely the main teaching content of vocational general education courses. From this, it can be seen that the general education courses in vocational colleges may seem incompatible with the basic characteristics of vocational education, but in reality, they have a profound value that cannot be ignored for the quality of talent cultivation.

### ***2.2 Inconsistent with the initial learning objectives of vocational students***

Vocational college students are generally composed of ordinary high school graduates and "three school students" (graduates from vocational schools, technical schools, and vocational colleges). Compared to students from other higher education institutions, vocational college students have a relatively weak knowledge foundation. Due to their slightly lower academic performance in the basic education stage, they were unable to enter better universities for study, so they ultimately chose to attend vocational colleges. They hope to acquire a skill through vocational education, so that they can make a living in society in the future. From this, it can be seen that the initial purpose of vocational students choosing to receive vocational education was simply to learn a skill during college that would enable them to establish themselves in the future. Therefore, a large proportion of vocational college students initially did not have the idea or demand to improve their humanistic and comprehensive qualities, but only wanted to come to vocational colleges to learn a "craft". Therefore, they simply believe that vocational general education courses are not in line with their majors, and have little value and significance for their own development, as well as future job hunting and work. Therefore, they are

more resistant to the learning and influence of general education.

Such a simple and narrow career and life plan makes it difficult for vocational college students to recognize and realize the importance of vocational general education courses for their adult and growth. This is not conducive to the formation of the correct "Three Views", as well as good social adaptability and professional activity abilities, and it is also difficult to make them possess scientific spirit and humanistic literacy. It can be seen that due to factors such as weak knowledge foundation and limited life experience, the majority of vocational college students urgently need timely and correct guidance and improvement in how to behave. In fact, vocational professional courses are more about teaching them how to learn to do things, while how to teach them how to be a person is mainly achieved through vocational general education courses. At first, vocational students only regarded doing things as their highest and only goal when entering vocational colleges. However, as the saying goes, "If you want to learn to do things, learn to be a person first." Therefore, they should never ignore the role and influence of general education courses on their growth. Without the correct guidance and influence of vocational general education courses, they will find it difficult to shoulder the significant responsibilities and missions entrusted to them by the times, and cannot truly become a member of the "high-quality industrial army" that combines engineering and learning, combines knowledge and action, and combines morality and technology.

### **3. The necessity of offering general education courses in vocational colleges**

The humanistic and comprehensive qualities cultivated by vocational general education courses are the key factors that determine whether students can succeed in their future careers, <sup>[4]</sup>and have important value and significance for the quality of talent cultivation in vocational colleges. Therefore, the general education curriculum in vocational colleges should not only be abolished, but should also be given sufficient attention and attention, which is actually the implementation and implementation of the concept of holistic education.

#### ***3.1 The need for vocational colleges to achieve the essence of education under the concept of "people-oriented"***

The essence of education lies in cultivating people with comprehensive development. Mr. Qian Weichang, a famous scientist in our country, once said, "The students we cultivate should first be comprehensive individuals...; secondly, they should be individuals with disciplinary and professional knowledge, as well as future engineers and experts." In addition, with the gradual improvement of China's socialist market economy system and the significant increase in marketization, employers have gradually raised their standards and requirements for innovative thinking and creativity among job seekers, while also placing increasing emphasis on their ideological and political qualities, humanistic qualities, team consciousness, physical and psychological qualities. From this, it can be seen that if current vocational education still only regards teaching students a professional skill as the highest talent cultivation goal of vocational education, it is inevitable to have a one-sided view, because this is far from meeting the needs of modern education and today's society for technical and skilled talents.

Therefore, vocational colleges should actively offer general education courses, continuously strengthen students' humanistic and comprehensive qualities, truly improve the quality of talent cultivation, and effectively meet the needs of the times and society for technical and skilled talents. The important significance of vocational general education courses for vocational college students lies in: it can enrich students' knowledge reserves, broaden their horizons, improve their knowledge structure, and on this basis, continuously consolidate their ideological and political qualities, actively expand their innovative thinking and creativity, and strive to improve their logical thinking and aesthetic taste, thereby comprehensively improving the comprehensive quality of vocational college students and achieving full education in name and deed.

Only in this way can vocational colleges continuously cultivate useful talents that can not only stand in the future society but also promote socialist modernization construction, and enable the majority of vocational students not only to have strong professional knowledge and skills, but also to have solid and profound general literacy and literacy. Nowadays, vocational college students face a series of practical problems such as lost political beliefs, distorted value orientations, lack of cultural literacy, vulgar aesthetic taste, and weak psychological quality. Generally speaking, these situations mostly rely on vocational general education courses to gradually carry out targeted guidance and cultivation. As a result, "general education, as a non professional and non utilitarian form of general

skills and basic quality education, is increasingly receiving high attention from vocational colleges.<sup>[5]</sup>

The emphasis of vocational general education courses on students' comprehensive qualities, as well as the respect and attention to their comprehensive development, will largely overcome a series of negative consequences caused by the excessive emphasis on professional courses in vocational education, and can also strive to avoid the "one-way people" who have "lost freedom and creativity" that have emerged in the developed industrial society of the West. It can not only enhance the cultural knowledge and theoretical literacy of vocational college students, better solve the problem of weak knowledge foundation of vocational college students, but also break the barriers and barriers between professional education, and improve the common problems of single skills and weak abilities among vocational college students. Obviously, vocational general education courses can help vocational colleges achieve the educational concept of "people-oriented" and enable vocational students to receive comprehensive training and development.

### ***3.2 The transformation of enterprises' demand for vocational talents in line with the background of knowledge economy***

In recent years, the knowledge economy has received increasing attention and gradually become an important economic type with great development vitality and potential. With the continuous development of the knowledge economy, the demand for talents, especially vocational talents, has quietly changed in enterprises, mainly manifested in the gradually higher standards and requirements for vocational talent cultivation. Traditional single skill training can no longer meet the needs of enterprises for vocational talents in the context of the knowledge economy. Only vocational students with rich knowledge reserves, high emotional intelligence, good communication and coordination abilities, and strong psychological qualities can stand out in the job competition and firmly establish themselves in the future workplace.

In such an environment and situation, in order to provide the most effective talent supply to enterprises, vocational colleges must vigorously adjust their talent training plans to fully meet the new needs of enterprises for vocational talent training specifications. In the adjustment of talent cultivation plans in vocational colleges, a more important aspect is to incorporate general education courses as an important link into the curriculum system of vocational education, that is, to "organically combine general education with the improvement of students' core professional abilities and the sustainability of their future development",<sup>[6]</sup> in order to gradually establish a system that can fully reflect the future development needs of vocational students. An efficient and scientific curriculum system and theoretical system for talent cultivation.

Therefore, vocational colleges should strive to cultivate vocational students with excellent ideological and political qualities, broad knowledge, and the ability to quickly establish harmonious interpersonal relationships with people around them through vocational general courses such as ideological and political theory courses, vocational college Chinese, and mental health education. At the same time, they should also be able to work and cooperate with people around them very smoothly. These abilities can enable vocational college students to meet the multiple rather than single needs of technical and skilled talents for the development of socialist market economy, and enable vocational colleges to gradually find the best fit between their talent training goals and the needs of enterprises and the market, in order to continuously adapt to the objective needs of the development of knowledge economy.

### ***3.3 Meet the objective requirements of students in a learning society to achieve lifelong sustainable learning***

Today's rapid technological advancements have led to increasingly high demands and rapid changes in job positions for practitioners. As a result, the knowledge and skills learned by everyone are easily outdated and will continue to be updated and eliminated. Therefore, vocational college students cannot learn in school once and for all, and must engage in lifelong sustainable learning.

At present, China has entered the early stage of a learning society. At the same time, there has been a saying in China since ancient times that "one is never too old to learn". Therefore, lifelong sustainable learning has become a basic consensus among people today. In the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, an important indicator for judging the quality and ability of talents is their awareness of lifelong sustainable learning and their ability to do so. So, if today's vocational college students only try to rely on their professional knowledge and skills learned in school, and try to eat all the fresh food

without paying attention to the update and progress of knowledge, they cannot fully adapt to the high standards and strict requirements of today's society for technical and skilled talents. They must possess high comprehensive qualities and self-learning abilities in order to achieve lifelong sustainable learning and adapt to the rapidly changing technology today.

Higher vocational general education courses can enable students to achieve comprehensive development and better cultivate and enhance their comprehensive qualities. At the same time, it can also enable vocational college students to gradually consolidate their knowledge foundation, start summarizing the regularity of learning, and ultimately develop the habit of self-directed learning and the ability to learn independently. This is also the most lacking aspect of vocational college students in the basic education stage. Therefore, the establishment of vocational general education courses meets the objective requirements of students in a learning society to achieve lifelong sustainable learning. On the one hand, it enables vocational college students to have the ability for lifelong sustainable learning, and on the other hand, it also gives vocational college students the awareness of lifelong sustainable learning. At the same time, it also makes vocational colleges truly a base for cultivating high-quality technical and skilled talents, rather than a place for students to receive single vocational or job training.

#### **4. The Development Strategy of General Education Courses in Higher Vocational Education**

Despite the great necessity of offering vocational general education courses, the practical problem is that the duration of vocational education is only three years, and the teaching time for these three years should not only include theoretical teaching time for professional courses, but also include students' time for practical training in school training venues and on-the-job internships in enterprises (companies). In this way, the majority of vocational colleges can leave little teaching time for general education courses. Faced with such practical difficulties, vocational general education courses should choose flexible methods, shift towards increasing their teaching time, and strive to promote and improve their teaching effectiveness. Under the existing conditions, vocational general education courses can be deeply integrated with the second classroom to promote the continuous improvement of talent cultivation quality in vocational colleges and promote the continuous deepening and improvement of inclusive development within vocational colleges.

The so-called "second classroom" refers to the teaching activities that exert influence on the educated object through organized extracurricular collective activities, beyond the curriculum specified in the normal teaching plan, with the support of the school and the guidance of teachers. In general, the first classroom is mainly responsible for completing basic teaching tasks and effectively developing students' intelligence, while the second classroom does not take on clear teaching tasks. It mainly focuses on exploring and exploring students' non-intelligent factors, and focuses on how to better cultivate students' sentiment, help them form good personality, stimulate their internal potential, and enhance their emotional intelligence experience, And improve their ability to innovate and practice.

##### ***4.1 The ideological and political theory course in vocational colleges aims to cultivate students' ideological and moral qualities through the integration of social practice and volunteer service in the second classroom***

Due to the limitations of class hours, teachers of ideological and political theory courses in vocational colleges are unable to fully demonstrate many of the content taught in class. Therefore, vocational ideological and political theory courses can be deeply integrated with the second classroom, fully leveraging the advantages of the second classroom being close to life, reality, and students, and carrying out various social practices and volunteer service activities. At the same time, the second classroom can also be used to organize students to collectively attend public hearings in the court where the school is located, so that students can learn to respect the law and consciously abide by the law based on their understanding of legal knowledge through the first classroom (ideological and political theory course). In addition, students can also participate in various volunteer service activities through the second classroom. In addition to the summer "Three Visits to the Countryside" activities, students' professional strengths can also be fully utilized, such as organizing computer science students to volunteer to help residents repair modern communication equipment such as computers in the community, and allowing clothing design students to give their designed clothing and dolls to students at Hope Elementary School. These activities can guide vocational college students to internalize the theoretical knowledge in ideological and political theory courses into their own values, externalize it into their own practical actions, and thus possess firm political beliefs, excellent ideological qualities,

noble moral cultivation, and selfless dedication.

#### ***4.2 The integration of vocational college Chinese language with second classroom club activities to cultivate students' humanistic literacy***

Vocational colleges can establish various literary clubs in the second classroom, and use these clubs to tell students excellent traditional Chinese cultural stories, spread the voice of China, and effectively exert the influence and inspiration of the second classroom. Chinese language teachers in vocational colleges can lead students to establish student associations such as the Chinese Studies Society, Tea Culture Association, Calligraphy Association, Debate Association, as well as Literature Society and Drama Society. These clubs can effectively extend the classroom teaching of Chinese language in vocational colleges, enabling students to have a deeper understanding of the elements of excellent traditional Chinese culture such as traditional Chinese knowledge, tea art, and calligraphy. At the same time, they can also help students improve their language expression and writing abilities. Then, by regularly organizing recitation competitions, classic literary works performance competitions, tea art design and tea ceremony performance competitions, as well as campus calligraphy competitions and essay competitions, students can increase their love for literature and culture through various colorful club activities and competitions, enhance their oral expression ability and on-site adaptability, and gradually establish a high level of humanistic literacy.

#### ***4.3 Higher vocational mathematics enhances students' innovation awareness and creativity through the integration of academic technology in the second classroom***

British mathematician Isaac Barrow once said that mathematics is the "unshakable cornerstone of science and a rich source of progress in promoting human cause". It can be seen that mathematics plays a fundamental role in various disciplines that cannot be underestimated. In recent years, the National College Students' Mathematical Modeling Competition (Junior College Group), which has received great attention, is not only a competition that only tests the mathematical knowledge of vocational college students, but also an important competition related to academic technology and innovation and entrepreneurship projects. It can effectively cultivate vocational college students' innovation awareness and creativity. Therefore, higher vocational mathematics teachers should provide specialized training in this area to students through the second classroom, which will effectively benefit students' future job hunting and work. With the transformation and upgrading of China's industrial structure, the demand standards for vocational talents in various industries are no longer limited to the examination of professional skills, but rather focus on the creative spirit of graduates. At the same time, the fundamental role of mathematics will also facilitate vocational college students to participate in other activities and competitions related to academic technology and innovation and entrepreneurship.

#### ***4.4 Vocational physical education and health courses, as well as mental health education courses, enhance students' comprehensive abilities by integrating them with the second classroom to cultivate their physical and mental development***

The harmonious development of body and mind is an important guarantee for the adult and growth of vocational college students. Therefore, physical education and health courses and mental health education courses also play an important role that cannot be ignored in vocational education. Physical education teachers in vocational colleges can lead students to create associations for various sports events in the second classroom, encourage and guide students to selectively join various associations based on personal preferences and physical conditions, and then lead students to conduct targeted physical exercise and specialized physical training, thereby increasing students' awareness and understanding of various sports events, improving their physical fitness, and cultivating their perseverance A competitive spirit of courage and hard work. This will help vocational college students have better physical fitness and perseverance in their future work. In terms of mental health, vocational mental health teachers can actively establish a mental health association in the second classroom, allowing students to understand mental health knowledge, learn appropriate stress relief methods and psychological crisis intervention methods, and organize various campus cultural activities that focus on mental health to promote mental health education to students. This will help vocational college students have strong psychological qualities in the future workplace and be able to face various difficulties and challenges.

## 5. Summary

As an important component of vocational education, vocational general education courses play an irreplaceable role in talent cultivation in vocational colleges. The majority of vocational colleges should adhere to the training model of "whole person education", constantly update educational concepts, and deeply integrate vocational general education courses with the second classroom, in order to fully leverage the educational effectiveness of vocational general education courses, and thus enable vocational education to truly become a "human" education rather than a "tool" education. The essence of vocational general education courses is to comprehensively coordinate the educational resources and forces of vocational education through the full combination of knowledge education and ability cultivation, as well as theoretical education and practical cultivation. It can not only cultivate technical and skilled talents with both moral and technical skills for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, but also vigorously promote the continuous deepening and improvement of the internal development of vocational colleges.

## Acknowledgements

This article is a phased research result of the 2019 curriculum reform project of Guangzhou Nanyang Vocational College of Technology, titled "Comprehensive Deepening of Curriculum Reform at Guangzhou Nanyang Vocational College of Technology - College Chinese" (NY-2019CQ2KC-01) .

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