

A Study on the Integration of "Humanistic quality + Vocational ability" about the Key Competence in Vocational Universities

Du Juan

*Department of Public Basic Courses, Nanjing Vocational University of Industry Technology,
Nanjing, China
duj@niit.edu.cn*

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Abstract: At present, vocational undergraduate education is in the exploratory stage. During this process, it is essential to first propose feasible implementation models in teaching practice to lay the groundwork for systematic planning. Therefore, starting from the educational concept of "humanistic qualities + vocational competencies," a truly viable path lies in achieving the ultimate goal of cultivating students into compound talents who possess both high-quality humanistic qualities and advanced vocational skills by integrating core competencies from multiple disciplines. Specifically, new approaches have been proposed to enhance the core competencies in English for vocational undergraduate education from four aspects: knowledge acquisition, thinking development, emotional integration, and cultural experience, with the aim of comprehensively improving the quality of English teaching in vocational undergraduate programs.

1. Introduction

In the process of drawing on the outstanding experiences of countries strong in vocational education development, such as Germany and the United Kingdom, China's vocational education community has come to realize that merely cultivating students' "professional technical skills" while neglecting the cultivation of other "comprehensive qualities" fails to nurture well-rounded individuals. Therefore, within the context of general education, research on the integration of multidisciplinary core competencies that combines vocational competence education with the cultivation of humanistic core qualities has emerged as one of the key focuses in current vocational undergraduate education. Among these, the cultivation of vocational competence is not only an essential requirement for vocational colleges in nurturing students but also an inevitable trend dictated by the inherent laws of vocational education. Meanwhile, the cultivation of humanistic core qualities aligns with the new demands placed on student development under the backdrop of the new liberal arts in today's era, which emphasizes the cultivation of well-rounded individuals. Furthermore, vocational undergraduate education, as the "undergraduate level of vocational education" and the "vocational type of undergraduate education," represents an inevitable outcome driven by both external educational demands and internal educational needs. It is neither merely an

"extended version" of vocational junior college education nor a "duplicate version" of regular undergraduate education. ^[1] Therefore, it is essential to ensure that students possess a comprehensive knowledge structure and solid vocational competencies, while also promoting the all-round development of their humanistic qualities and comprehensive abilities. Ultimately, this enables students to apply the professional theoretical knowledge they have learned in school to future workplace practices, allowing them to comprehensively utilize various liberal arts general knowledge and professional technical skills to solve problems encountered in real-world work scenarios.

2. New Approaches to Integrating "Humanistic Literacy + Vocational Competence" across Multiple Disciplines in the Context of Smart Learning

2.1. Knowledge Acquisition

The starting point for cultivating core competencies can be approached from the perspective of knowledge structure. Firstly, knowledge is typically acquired through teacher instruction and personal practice. For vocational college students, knowledge in humanities disciplines can be imparted by teachers through the organization and accumulation of fragmented knowledge, thereby refining the knowledge system structure and focusing on fostering the overall development of students' humanistic qualities such as language, culture, and thinking. Professional knowledge, on the other hand, is more complex and closely tied to practical experience, encompassing pure theoretical knowledge, foundational technical knowledge, and applied skill knowledge. The production and application of occupational knowledge are closely tied to the workplace, which means its transmission is highly challenging. Unlike abstract knowledge, it cannot be efficiently transmitted in a classroom setting but must be acquired through hands-on apprenticeship in the workplace, along with repeated practice and personal insight. ^[2] Therefore, the integration of industry and education, as well as school-enterprise cooperation, is crucial for the further development of vocational education, especially vocational undergraduate education. Schools should collaborate with society and enterprises to refine vocational expertise, align professional knowledge with industrial chain development, and establish more laboratories and training centers to enable students to learn by doing and explore the cultivation of professional compound talents. Meanwhile, in the context of smart learning, a shared platform integrating school instruction, enterprise practice, and product development should be formed based on social needs and practical conditions, aligning with vocational education standards. This platform should promptly incorporate new enterprise technologies and processes into teaching standards, adhering to a quality-centric approach to bridge the gap between professional talent cultivation and societal job demands. In essence, theoretical knowledge originates from and surpasses practice, with vocational education serving as a vital pathway to realize this concept. Practical knowledge from enterprises, processed and organized by professional teachers, is meticulously imparted to students, who then apply it to guide their practical work after graduation. This virtuous cycle represents the ultimate convergence of vocational education with economic development needs and the path to leading global vocational education with Chinese characteristics.

2.2. Cognitive Training

Cognitive qualities reflect an individual's level and characteristics in terms of logical, critical, and creative thinking, representing a core competency that best reflects individual traits. ^[3] Historically, compared to other countries worldwide, the cultivation of cognitive qualities among Chinese students has often been overlooked. In both primary and secondary schools as well as

universities, knowledge transmission has dominated, while exercises in logical, critical, and innovative thinking have been relatively scarce. Previous surveys have also shown that while Chinese students generally develop satisfactory logical thinking skills through science education by the time they reach university, their critical and innovative thinking qualities still require enhancement. However, students' cognitive qualities can be cultivated through more efforts. Combining thinking with specific disciplines can foster students' cognitive abilities in those areas. For instance, integrating thinking with humanities disciplines like English can enable students to think and express themselves in English as fluently as in their native language, cultivating their imaginative thinking skills. Integration with science and engineering disciplines primarily cultivates students' logical thinking skills, namely the ability to think, analyze problems, and draw conclusions. Today, in vocational education, the most crucial cognitive qualities to cultivate in students' core competencies are critical and innovative thinking. Critical thinking emphasizes students' courage to question and challenge authority, while innovative thinking is particularly vital as it aligns with the original purpose of vocational education—to serve society with innovative theories and technologies. Therefore, cultivating innovative talents is urgent, especially for vocational undergraduate institutions aiming to distinguish themselves from regular undergraduate programs and higher vocational colleges. Innovative thinking stresses innovation, which involves proposing new viewpoints and ideas based on existing knowledge, rather than adhering to conventional norms. To this end, in both humanities and science and engineering courses, teachers should effectively pose questions in smart classrooms, stimulate students' thinking, mobilize their cognitive enthusiasm, and encourage them to propose novel ideas and approaches. Leveraging popular tools like mind maps in instructional design can fully embody both divergent and integrative thinking, thereby achieving optimal teaching outcomes.

2.3. Emotional Integration

Bloom proposed the "affective domain" theory of teaching objectives in the 1950s, asserting that "cognition, emotion, and psychomotor activities constitute the three essential domains for achieving overall teaching objectives." [4] Students' emotional development has long been the weakest link in China's educational landscape, with a persistent emphasis on cognition over emotion. This issue has further deteriorated with the widespread adoption and advancement of computer technology. Only by addressing both cognitive and emotional aspects can true teaching reform be achieved, nurturing well-rounded individuals. Therefore, emotional development must be organically integrated with the cultivation of a holistic personality. Currently, the multimedia "three-dimensional" teaching model integrating networks and courses in the context of smart learning has become mainstream in universities. However, the separation between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves, without traditional face-to-face classroom interaction, has led to emotional detachment and deficiency, which contradicts the goal of cultivating students' core competencies in a comprehensive manner. Human development encompasses both emotional and cognitive dimensions, which are interdependent, mutually reinforcing, and inseparable. Cognition requires emotional interaction for support, while emotion necessitates cognitive activity for participation. Emotion, in particular, plays a crucial role in human practical activities. Therefore, promoting students' emotional development constitutes an indispensable part of vocational undergraduate education. Only by integrating emotional education into various courses can favorable teaching outcomes be achieved. Humanities courses inherently contain direct or implicit strong emotions that students can genuinely perceive and naturally incorporate into their learning. In contrast, science and engineering courses require teachers to fully mobilize the positive role of emotional factors in teaching when presenting content, while leveraging the advantages of network platforms and

multimedia to meticulously design teaching sessions. This approach breaks physical barriers, creates a relaxed and enjoyable classroom atmosphere, fully mobilizes students' interest and enthusiasm for learning, and enables them to experience the practical value of the curriculum while generating rich emotional experiences. This achieves organic integration of cognition and emotion, inspiring intelligence and promoting knowledge through emotion.

2.4. Cultural Experience

Against the backdrop of the "Belt and Road" initiative, economic globalization, and educational internationalization, cross-cultural communication competence has become an essential ability for future talents. Firstly, the glorious mission of a community with a shared future for mankind requires us to understand and deeply recognize Chinese and Western cultures, enhance cultural understanding through active participation in cultural practice activities, and thereby respect the diversity of world cultures. This involves identifying with and upholding our own national cultural stance while drawing nourishment from appreciating and discerning excellent Western cultures, thereby forming cross-cultural communication awareness. Secondly, UNESCO emphasizes that "vocational education should promote international understanding and inclusivity, cultivate citizens with a global perspective and a sense of responsibility, and advocate for strengthening international cooperation in vocational education." [5] To drive high-quality development of global vocational and technical education and continuously cultivate more high-quality technical and skilled talents, we must emphasize the cultivation of students' cultural qualities while imparting theoretical knowledge. In this regard, humanities disciplines, especially curriculum ideological and political education, must be integrated into professional course learning. For instance, introducing professional bilingual courses with an international perspective and adding professional elective courses with international content can seize opportunities to directly display multicultural scenarios using the multimedia environment under smart learning, expanding cross-cultural horizons, enhancing cross-cultural cognition, actively disseminating excellent traditional Chinese culture, promoting mutual learning among Chinese and foreign civilizations, telling Chinese stories well, spreading China's voice effectively, showcasing the image of a major country, and shouldering international responsibilities. Finally, if vocational college students are to support the development of "Belt and Road" countries after graduation, they must possess foundational skills in foreign-related management and the ability to communicate proficiently in English in the workplace. Therefore, opportunities for face-to-face communication with international students should be created through international exchanges, providing students with authentic opportunities for cross-cultural communication practice and cultivating their ability to solve practical problems in cross-cultural communication.

3. Conclusions

China's vocational education serves as a foundational project for cultivating high-quality, skilled talents and a vital pathway for promoting economic and social development and the holistic development of individuals. It plays a significant and evident role in promoting employment, ensuring the stability of industrial chains, enhancing people's well-being, and supporting the real economy, attracting increasing attention from society. Throughout their practical journey, vocational colleges have gradually refined their educational philosophies, evolving from initial integration of work and study and school-enterprise cooperation to the current integration of industry and education and convergence of vocational and general education. The revised Vocational Education Law, implemented on May 1, 2022, legally recognizes the status of undergraduate-level vocational education for the first time, marking the establishment of China's

vocational education system encompassing "secondary vocational education - higher vocational education - undergraduate vocational education." It also clarifies that the foremost positioning of vocational education is to provide high-quality technical and skilled talents for industrial development. Therefore, we should focus on enhancing the quality and excellence of undergraduate vocational education, driving high-quality development of vocational education, and forging distinctive features in undergraduate vocational education. We should integrate school-enterprise cooperation and work-study integration throughout the entire process of talent cultivation, fostering students' compound, in-depth, and innovative undergraduate vocational traits. This will enable us to cultivate applied talents for industries and enterprises who serve the national "Belt and Road" strategy, possess a reasonable knowledge structure and adaptability, and demonstrate "global frontier capabilities," as this represents the mission and responsibility of our vocational colleges.

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