

Research on the Teaching Pathway for Vocational Undergraduate Human Resource Management Based on Competency Development

Yeqian Chen*

Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou, Hainan, 571126, China

**Corresponding Author*

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Abstract: The vocational undergraduate program in human resources faces a structural dilemma where teaching approaches deviate from the logic of competency cultivation. Using the competency model as an analytical framework, this study systematically diagnoses issues such as vague objectives, fragmented content, simulated processes, and superficial evaluations in current teaching practices. It reveals that the root causes lie in teachers' insufficient translation capabilities, institutional constraints, and superficial school-enterprise collaboration. Consequently, the study constructs a teaching pathway aligned with competency cultivation from dimensions of objective reshaping, content restructuring, and process reconstruction. It further proposes the transformation of teacher competencies, changes in teaching organizational forms, and institutional-cultural safeguards required for effective implementation. The research argues that the core of teaching reform in vocational undergraduate human resources programs lies in systematically shifting from "knowledge logic" to "competency logic", providing a theoretical reference for the design of teaching pathways in similar majors.

1. Introduction

From its inception, vocational undergraduate education has been assigned a clear type of positioning: it is different from vocational junior colleges which focus on job operation skills, and also distinct from ordinary undergraduate education which aims at academic theoretical literacy. Instead, it points to the systematic cultivation of high-level technical and skilled talents [1]. This unique institutional positioning makes the design of teaching paths for vocational undergraduate majors a theoretical proposition and practical issue that urgently needs in-depth research. The human resources major, due to its highly complex work objects, strong dependence on work contexts, and complex ability structures, faces particularly prominent challenges in this transformation. However, the current teaching practice of vocational undergraduate human resources majors generally presents a predicament of "excessive knowledge imparting but insufficient ability generation". Behind this "ability deficit" phenomenon lies a structural problem of long-term deviation of teaching paths from the logic of ability and quality cultivation - the

virtualization of goals, fragmentation of content, simulation of processes, and superficiality of evaluation mutually reinforcing, forming an unbreakable closed loop [2].

Based on the above judgment, this paper takes the ability and quality model as the analytical framework, focusing on the construction of teaching paths for vocational undergraduate human resources majors. The research starts by diagnosing the main deviations and deep roots in current teaching practice, then systematically designs teaching paths aimed at ability and quality cultivation from three dimensions: goal reformation, content reconfiguration, and process reengineering. Finally, it explores the teacher ability transformation, teaching organization form change, and institutional culture guarantee required for the effective operation of this path. This paper aims to provide an analytical framework with logical rigor and practical reference value for the teaching reform of vocational undergraduate HR majors, and also offers theoretical resources that can be drawn upon for the design of teaching paths for other management majors.

2. Examination of the teaching problems of vocational undergraduate human resources majors under the guidance of ability and quality cultivation

2.1 The particularity of vocational undergraduate human resources professional competence and quality cultivation

In the field of human resource management, competency is usually understood as a stable set of characteristics that individuals can produce excellent performance in specific work situations. It includes both visible knowledge and skills, as well as deeper elements such as self-awareness, personality traits, and internal drive. For vocational undergraduate HR majors, the training goal is not to train junior operational clerks or academic reserve forces engaged in human resource theory research, but to cultivate a group of applied talents who can independently complete complex tasks such as recruitment and selection, performance management, and employee relationship handling in frontline organizational contexts, and possess certain business understanding abilities and management potential. This intermediate positioning determines that the composition of abilities and qualities has obvious composite characteristics.

Specifically, the core competencies pointed out by vocational undergraduate HR majors include at least three interrelated levels. One is professional service ability, which means proficiently mastering the operational processes and tool methods of various modules of human resources, and being able to complete routine tasks such as writing job descriptions, compiling salary data, and organizing training courses within a given framework. The second is situational judgment ability, which refers to the ability to identify key issues, weigh alternative solutions, and make reasonable professional decisions when facing ambiguous conditions, incomplete information, or conflicts of interest among multiple parties. For example, in the handling of employee disciplinary violations, it is necessary to consider both institutional provisions and the organizational culture and potential legal risks. This judgment is difficult to convey through simple rule teaching. The third is interpersonal interaction and professional ethics, including communication and coordination, emotional awareness, confidentiality awareness, and ethical compliance.

2.2 Main deviations in the current teaching path of HR profession

Looking at the current teaching practice of vocational undergraduate HR majors, a common tension can be found: the course design covers various knowledge modules of human resource management in appearance, and students can also restate concepts and list key points in the final assessment. However, when faced with a real and oversimplified HR work situation, they often show obvious "ability deficit". The root of this phenomenon lies in the fact that the teaching path

actually points to the storage and reproduction of knowledge, rather than the generation and transfer of abilities.

At the level of teaching objectives, a common problem is the virtualization and generalization of ability objectives. Although many course syllabi may include statements such as "cultivating students' analytical and communication skills", these goals lack actionable behavioral definitions and corresponding evaluation criteria; At the level of teaching content, subject logic still dominates the way courses are organized. Most HR professional courses are organized according to the internal structure of the knowledge system, with the implicit assumption that students first master the knowledge and then naturally apply it. However, the formation of competence follows the opposite path - it often begins with exposure to real tasks, exposes knowledge gaps in the process of trying to solve problems, and then supplements and learns in a targeted manner; At the level of teaching process, practical teaching generally stays at the level of verification and simulation. The typical pattern is that the teacher teaches a tool or method, the students complete a simulation exercise according to the established steps, and finally the teacher provides standard answer feedback. This type of training is difficult to generate true situational judgment, as judgment can only be exercised when facing real uncertainty; In terms of evaluation methods, closed book exams still dominate. Objectively speaking, closed book exams are effective in measuring students' memory of basic concepts and processes, but they can hardly capture the formation status of implicit abilities. When the evaluation method does not point to abilities, students will quickly adjust their learning strategies - they will focus their energy on the "exam" content, while the truly important ability training will be marginalized.

2.3 Structural Root Causes of Teaching Difficulties

Firstly, the bottlenecks at the teacher level cannot be ignored. Although most teachers of vocational undergraduate programs have a postgraduate degree, a significant proportion of them have an academic training background that starts and ends at the university, lacking real working experience in HR positions in enterprises. Even those teachers who participated in short-term enterprise practices were still unable to effectively convert their practical experiences into professional capabilities for task-based teaching design. In other words, the key to becoming a dual-qualified teacher does not lie in whether they have "enterprise experience", but in whether they can transform industry experience into a training carrier for students' ability development.

Secondly, there are rigid constraints at the institutional level. The current curriculum design, class scheduling methods, and credit recognition standards of many vocational undergraduate institutions still follow the framework of ordinary undergraduate programs. The fixed class hours under the semester system are difficult to support long-term and multi-week comprehensive task-based teaching. At the same time, the professional assessment and quality monitoring system still mainly rely on quantifiable indicators such as textbook usage, exam archives, and completion of class hours, and the achievement level of ability goals lacks effective monitoring methods. This institutional environment to some extent suppresses teachers' enthusiasm for exploring task-driven teaching [3].

Finally, the superficiality of school-enterprise cooperation is also an important constraint factor. Currently, the majority of institutions' school-enterprise cooperation remains at the level of signing plaques at internship bases and occasional lectures by enterprise personnel. The real work tasks and business problems of enterprises have not been deeply embedded in the daily teaching process. There is a lack of a stable mechanism between schools and enterprises that enables HR positions in enterprises to continuously provide real cases, raw data, and business value task propositions to the

classroom. Without such deep embedding, the ability training in the teaching path can only remain at the simulation level and cannot touch the complexity of real situations.

3. Construction of the HR Professional Teaching Path Based on Competency Development

3.1 Teaching Objectives System Guided by Competency Map

Firstly, a core competency map for the vocational undergraduate HR program needs to be constructed. Based on the decomposition of typical job tasks in HR positions, the core competencies that this program aims to achieve can be summarized into four dimensions. The first is business insight ability, which means understanding the business logic of the industry and organization, and being able to identify the priorities of HR work based on business needs. This is the key ability for HR to shift from being a functional support role to a business partner. The second is professional service ability, which covers the operational execution of various core modules of human resources, including but not limited to recruitment selection, training organization, salary calculation, and employee relationship management. This ability is relatively explicit and can be strengthened through task training. The third is interpersonal influence ability, including communication coordination, conflict resolution, and persuasive guidance, etc. These skills are particularly crucial in employee relationship management and performance interviews. The fourth is data literacy and ethical judgment. The former refers to the ability to collect, clean, and analyze HR-related data and form decision recommendations based on it. The latter points to the ability to weigh the interests of the organization, employees' rights and social responsibilities beyond the compliance bottom line. These four dimensions are not isolated from each other but mutually supportive [4].

3.2 Task Chain-driven Modular Curriculum Design

The organizational logic of course content should shift from "knowledge logic" to "task logic". Specifically, a course can be decomposed into several interrelated task chains based on typical HR tasks. Unlike isolated exercises, a task chain is a sequence of tasks that are connected sequentially and have increasing difficulty. Each task points to one or several specific abilities and qualities, and the subsequent task often builds upon the product or reflection generated by the previous task. This task chain-driven curriculum design has several key features. First, the presentation of knowledge is "embedded" rather than "pre-positioned" - when students encounter knowledge barriers during the task progress, the teacher provides targeted explanations or learning resources. At this point, students' learning motivation is the strongest, and the absorption efficiency of knowledge is the highest. Second, the design of task scenarios needs to retain a moderate degree of openness, allowing multiple paths to achieve the task goal, and even allowing students to make mistakes and discover errors in the review process, because the true formation of abilities and qualities often occurs in the reflection on failure. Third, each task in the task chain should produce visible results. These results are both the carriers of students' learning and the basis for subsequent evaluation.

3.3 Reflective Practice as the Core Teaching Strategy

With clear ability goals and content organization based on tasks, the organization of the teaching process also needs to be adjusted accordingly. The basic process of traditional teaching is "lecture - practice - examination", where the teacher first presents knowledge points, students complete standardized exercises, and finally verify the mastery level through examinations. This process is suitable for the transmission of procedural knowledge, but it is difficult to support the systematic

generation of ability qualities. The cultivation of ability qualities requires a different teaching strategy, namely reflective practice.

The core of reflective practice lies in the four-stage cycle of action, reflection, abstraction, and transfer. After students complete a task, they are guided to review their action process, including the difficulties encountered, the basis for decisions, better handling methods, the general principles that can be abstracted, and future improvement directions. This systematic reflection transforms one-time task experiences into transferable ability accumulation. In the teaching of the HR major at the vocational undergraduate level, standardized reflection nodes can be set, such as arranging structured group reviews after each task submission, requiring students to self-analyze from the perspectives of information collection, scheme basis, unexpected situations, and improvement adjustments.

Complementary to reflective practice is the design of context variability. The transferability of ability qualities does not occur automatically. The strategies learned by students in one context may fail when applied in a different condition. Therefore, in teaching design, intentional creation of context variability should be made, setting different constraints for different students or batches within the same task framework. For example, in the performance management course task, one group faces problems of traditional manufacturing enterprises, and another group faces similar problems of internet startups. When the two groups' solutions are reviewed, they can mutually examine each other, and students can intuitively feel the impact of context variables on professional decision-making. This training helps break the mindset of standard answers and cultivate students' sensitivity to organizational contexts and their ability to be flexible and adaptable.

4. Operation mechanism and implementation conditions of teaching path

4.1 Teacher Capability Transformation

The implementation of teaching paths ultimately relies on teachers to complete. In the traditional teaching mode, the core role of teachers is knowledge transmitters, and their professional abilities are mainly reflected in their systematic grasp and clear explanation of subject knowledge. Under the guidance of cultivating abilities and qualities, the functions of teachers have undergone substantial changes. They are no longer just good speakers, but should also be well-designed individuals. This transformation has put forward new competency requirements for vocational undergraduate HR teachers.

Specifically, teachers need to have the ability to translate industry experience into task-based teaching. This does not require every teacher to have years of experience in enterprise HR, but emphasizes that teachers should be able to identify typical tasks, key difficulties, and decision-making nodes in real HR work, and transform them into actionable learning tasks. For example, if a teacher who teaches performance management can start from the real performance implementation dilemma of a company and design a task chain that allows students to gradually solve the problems of indicator system design, assessment cycle determination, face-to-face plan formulation, and result application balance, the teaching value far exceeds explaining concepts and tools chapter by chapter. The essence of this ability is a teaching transformation ability, which involves breaking down, filtering, and reorganizing complex situations in industry practice into task sequences that are suitable for students' learning levels. For vocational undergraduate teachers who currently lack in-depth enterprise experience, the cultivation of this ability requires a systematic development path, including regular short-term on-site observation in cooperative enterprises, participation in case development workshops, and forming task design communities with other teachers.

In addition to task design ability, the process guidance ability of teachers in the new teaching path is also crucial. When teaching shifts from imparting knowledge to task driven, the main activities in the classroom are no longer teacher output and student reception, but rather student task completion, teacher observation, and intervention. At this point, the teacher's responsibility is to provide support at the appropriate time, give prompts when students fall into ineffective exploration, organize concentrated explanations when multiple groups encounter similar problems, and guide in-depth review after completing the task. This guided teaching requires high on-site judgment ability from teachers. Early intervention may deprive students of the opportunity to explore independently, while late intervention may lead students to complete the entire task with incorrect cognition. The best way to cultivate this ability is to repeatedly practice in real teaching situations, supplemented by peer observation and video review analysis. At the institutional level, such professional development support should be provided for teachers, rather than simply placing the responsibility of teaching reform on frontline teachers.

4.2 Transformation of Teaching Organizational Forms

The effective operation of teaching paths not only relies on the improvement of individual teacher abilities, but also requires corresponding adjustments to the teaching organizational form at the institutional level. The semester system, fixed class hours system, and classroom teaching system commonly used in current vocational undergraduate colleges have inherent conflicts with the task driven ability development model to some extent [5].

The conflict first manifests in the time structure. A comprehensive human resource management task, from problem identification, information collection, solution design to result presentation, often requires students to continuously invest over a period of two weeks or even longer. The traditional scheduling method is to have 2 to 4 fixed class hours per week for each course, which forces students' cognitive investment to be fragmented. Each class requires a considerable amount of time to review the previous progress, greatly reducing the efficiency of task progress. More flexible arrangements include modular scheduling and project week system. Modular scheduling arranges a course to be completed within three to four consecutive weeks, ensuring sufficient study time every day and allowing students to immerse themselves in task situations. The project week system sets one to two weeks in each semester, suspending regular courses and dedicated to cross course collaboration for comprehensive tasks. For example, students from the three courses of "Recruitment and Evaluation", "Labor Regulations", and "Organizational Behavior" can work together to complete a major project from job analysis, recruitment implementation to onboarding management. This organizational form not only conforms to the laws of ability generation, but also simulates the real state of cross functional collaboration in the workplace to a certain extent.

Secondly, the credit recognition mechanism also needs to be relaxed accordingly. Under the traditional system, there is a rigid correspondence between credits and class hours, with almost no flexibility in how many hours a course corresponds to how many credits. However, in task driven teaching, there may be significant differences in the time required for different students to complete the same task. Some students may be able to produce high-quality results in a shorter amount of time, while others require more time to digest and repeatedly try. If credits are strictly tied to attendance hours, it is actually punishing students with high efficiency and limiting the possibility of students who need more time. An alternative solution that can be explored is to introduce ability credits or project credits - students earn credits by completing a comprehensive task that has been reviewed and achieving the required performance level, with learning time arranged independently by students and phased guidance provided by teachers. This mode puts forward higher requirements

for teachers' process management ability in operation, but it is more in line with the internal logic of cultivating ability and quality, and can also stimulate students' awareness of self-directed learning.

4.3 Guarantee Conditions at the Institutional and Cultural Levels

If the teaching reform lacks institutional support, it is often difficult to sustain; if it lacks cultural identification, it is hard to deepen. Therefore, the implementation of the teaching path oriented towards ability and quality cultivation requires the establishment of corresponding guarantee mechanisms at both the institutional and cultural levels.

At the institutional level, educational institutions need to redesign the indicator system for quality assessment. The current assessment system often focuses on quantifiable process indicators, such as whether textbook selection is standardized, whether examination archives are complete, and whether class hours are implemented properly. These indicators do help maintain the basic teaching order, but they do not point to the essence of teaching quality - whether students' ability and quality have truly developed. A more reasonable assessment orientation is to shift the focus to students' learning outcomes, including the quality of students' task achievements, the progress trajectory presented in the ability growth portfolio, and the job adaptability performance of graduates. Of course, the collection and assessment of these outcome indicators are much more complex than checking examination archives. Educational institutions need to invest resources in building corresponding evaluation tools and information systems. Additionally, the governance structure at the professional level also needs to be adjusted. Establishing a teaching guidance committee composed of internal teachers and enterprise HR to regularly review the timeliness of the ability map, review the rationality of typical tasks, and participate in the outcome evaluation of comprehensive projects is a worthy institutional arrangement. Such mechanisms can effectively prevent the teaching path from gradually deviating from the initial design intention during its operation [6].

At the cultural level, the implementation of the teaching path requires the cultivation of a "trial-and-error - reflection - iteration" teaching culture. Task-driven teaching inherently has uncertainty - students may fail in a certain task, and a teacher's one-time teaching design may not be as effective as expected. This is a normal phenomenon in the ability cultivation process. However, in a management culture that overly pursues norms and certainty, this uncertainty is easily regarded as "teaching accidents" or "quality issues", thereby suppressing teachers' willingness to explore new teaching methods. Therefore, the educational institution management needs to clearly convey such a signal: Teaching reform allows for meaningful failures, as long as a systematic reflection can be formed after the failure and promote the next round of improvement. At the same time, a regular teaching discussion mechanism should be established to allow teachers who try task-based teaching to have the opportunity to share their successful experiences and failure lessons, forming an open and mutually supportive professional community. The formation of this cultural atmosphere often has a more lasting supporting effect on the continuous optimization of the teaching path than any specific institutional arrangement.

In conclusion, for the teaching path oriented towards ability and quality cultivation to move from design to implementation, it needs to form collaborative support at the three levels of teachers' capabilities, teaching organizational forms, and institutional culture. Teachers are the direct actors, and their ability to design tasks and guide the process determines the quality of the path's implementation; the organizational form is the carrier, flexible time arrangements and credit systems provide appropriate space for ability cultivation; institutional and cultural factors are the soil, which determines whether the reform can be sustained and deepened. None of the three can be missing, and together they constitute the necessary conditions for the operation of the teaching path.

5. Conclusion

This article systematically constructs a teaching path for vocational undergraduate HR majors based on the cultivation of abilities and qualities. The study proposes that an effective teaching path should anchor teaching goals with a competency map, drive content organization with task chains, integrate reflective practice into the teaching process, and track ability growth with expressive evaluation. At the same time, the role of teachers needs to shift from knowledge transmitters to learning designers, and the organizational form of teaching needs to break through the traditional semester system and rigid constraints of class hours. The institutional system and culture also need to be adjusted accordingly. The key to the teaching reform of vocational undergraduate HR major lies in transforming the cultivation of abilities and qualities from conceptual advocacy to an operational and practical teaching operation mechanism.

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