

Strategies for Building Sustainable Models of School-Enterprise Cooperation in Vocational Colleges in China

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ABSTRACT

School-enterprise cooperation is a model for vocational colleges and enterprises to jointly cultivate high-quality professional talents, which is beneficial for enhancing students' vocational abilities and competitiveness and promoting the development of vocational education. In recent years, school-enterprise cooperation has achieved certain results, but there are still many problems, School-enterprise cooperation faces constraints such as mismatched talent training mechanisms, uncoordinated talent training content, and inconsistent talent training goals, resulting in low enthusiasm among students in enterprise practices, poor adaptability, limited career development, and affecting the effectiveness and quality of school-enterprise cooperation. This article proposes strategies in four aspects: integration and co-construction of school-enterprise culture, sharing and complementing educational resources, enhancing the quality of talent training, and establishing an achievement evaluation system. These strategies aim to strengthen communication and collaboration between schools and enterprises, achieve consistency in talent training objectives and content, enhance students' core competencies and professional ethics, and promote the sustainable development of school-enterprise cooperation.

KEYWORDS

Vocational Colleges; School-Enterprise Cooperation; Sustainable; Construction; Strategy.

1. CONCEPT AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND OF SCHOOL-ENTERPRISE COOPERATION

School-enterprise cooperation in Chinese vocational colleges refers to the establishment of close cooperation between schools and enterprises, aiming to jointly cultivate and develop high-quality vocational talents. With the vigorous development of vocational education in China, school-enterprise cooperation in vocational colleges has become an important task for the education sector. Through this cooperation model, not only can the vocational abilities of vocational college students be enhanced, but it can also improve enterprises' recognition and satisfaction with vocational college graduates, thereby changing society's bias against vocational education and promoting the sustainable development of vocational education. With the transformation and upgrading of industries, talents have become a key factor. Currently, although vocational education in China has achieved initial success in school-enterprise cooperation and the integration of production and education, it is still necessary to establish a sound operating system and long-term mechanism that can adapt to environmental changes. With the transformation and upgrading of industries, higher requirements have been put forward for the quality of vocational talents. The demand for applied skills-oriented talents in emerging positions is urgent. School-enterprise cooperation is conducive to the cultivation of high-quality applied skills-oriented talents, the construction of practical teaching curriculum systems, the promotion of the organic combination of knowledge learning and professional skills

training during students' school period, meeting enterprises' demand for high-quality talents, and promoting industrial upgrading and economic development. With the rise of the digital and intelligent era, the shortage of applied and technical skills-oriented talents is no longer limited to high-tech industries. The social life service industry is also facing the same challenges. The new era has put forward new requirements for the knowledge and competence of workers, thus the training system for applied and technical skills-oriented talents needs to be redesigned according to the needs of talent growth. When facing opportunities and challenges, how to formulate talent training strategies and cultivate applied talents that contribute to the coordinated development of regional economy has become a historical mission that vocational colleges across the country must undertake.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF SCHOOL-ENTERPRISE COOPERATION IN VOCATIONAL COLLEGES

In recent years, the integration of production and education has been a key focus of development in China's education industry. Various industries in society now require talents who possess solid professional abilities and outstanding practical application skills. It is necessary for students to learn in the "real battlefield," a concept particularly prevalent in vocational schools. While there is a surplus of high-achieving students in the market, industries demand not only high achievers but also professionals with solid skills for basic positions. Skilled and experienced professionals are highly sought after, and in some ways, there is greater demand in society for vocational education students than for high-achieving students.

The cultivation of applied and technical skills-oriented talents requires students to have solid professional abilities and outstanding practical application skills. Based on their own characteristics and talent development needs, vocational colleges collaborate with leading industry enterprises in talent cultivation, technological innovation, employment and entrepreneurship, social services, and cultural inheritance. By accumulating technical skills as a link, they establish platforms for talent cultivation and technological innovation, promote the industrialization of innovative achievements and core technologies, and gradually form a community of shared destiny between schools and enterprises.

Improving the quality of vocational education is necessary for deepening the comprehensive reform of higher education and optimizing the structure of higher education, which is crucial for enhancing the capacity for national and local economic and social development. Currently, although China's higher vocational education has achieved preliminary results in "school-enterprise cooperation" and the integration of industry and education, a corresponding operating system and long-term mechanism have not been established overall, and there are many problems at various levels. For example, there is a lack of practical teaching facilities and equipment, it is difficult to ensure practical teaching time, traditional disciplinary curriculum systems and teaching management systems cannot meet the needs, and practical teaching methods and teaching tools are outdated. There is also a lack of standardized practical training materials. Therefore, the current situation of the training model for applied talents does not match the status of vocational education in the national economy and the speed of economic development, posing high demands on practical teaching in vocational colleges. Enhancing students' adaptability to occupational positions and enabling them to quickly engage in various job positions after graduation require comprehensive innovation and reform in teaching models, methods, tools, and content during the practical process.

3. CONSTRAINTS OF SCHOOL-ENTERPRISE COOPERATION IN VOCATIONAL COLLEGES

3.1. Mismatched Talent Cultivation Mechanism

The talent cultivation mechanism between schools and enterprises is mismatched. Classroom teaching in schools lags behind the demands of enterprises, leading to a misalignment of job positions in collaborative education between schools and enterprises, resulting in a relative detachment between educational practices and practical experiences in enterprises. School-enterprise cooperation often adopts a long-term assembly line approach, causing students to have a weak sense of identity with the enterprises. Graduates from vocational colleges often struggle to master core skills or complete projects independently. Additionally, with the fluidity of the labor market and the uncertainty of new technological developments, students may drop out, increasing the cost of hiring for enterprises. In the current situation, it is necessary to establish a long-term mechanism for collaborative education between schools and enterprises, integrating skills into students' fair and reasonable cultivation to achieve mutual goals of teaching quality.

3.2. Training Content is Different

Currently, there is a lack of differentiation between vocational and technical students' practical experiences in workplace positions in society and enterprises. Enterprises focus on training qualified skill operators while neglecting management knowledge and innovation capabilities, which are essential for vocational quality training. This leads to low enthusiasm among vocational college students for practical experiences in enterprises, and some non-technical students even develop a resistance to internships, which deviates significantly from the original intention of integrating industry and education. The collaborative education model between schools and enterprises emphasizes skill training but overlooks humanistic qualities, professional ethics, and new media skills, which are not in line with the needs of modern society. As a result, students lack a sense of belonging in employment positions, have poor adaptability, limited promotion opportunities, and encounter difficulties in transitioning between positions, all of which affect their future career development.

3.3. Inconsistent Talent Cultivation Goals

Enterprises prioritize production efficiency, with the fundamental goal being to cultivate students who can continuously serve the company. They expect students to focus on "skills-centered" training and produce more qualified products within a specified timeframe to create more value, ultimately contributing to the company's continuous value creation. On the other hand, the goal of school education is not only to help students find good jobs after graduation but also to assist them in establishing career planning awareness, focusing on students' lifelong development.

4. STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE MODEL OF SCHOOL-ENTERPRISE COOPERATION IN VOCATIONAL COLLEGES

4.1. School-Enterprise Cultural Integration and Co-Building and Sharing Mechanism

1) Mutual complementation of material resources: Schools and enterprises establish internship bases and share teaching equipment; enterprises set up research and development centers in schools, utilizing the school's faculty resources; jointly develop core practical curriculum systems to achieve organic integration between courses and occupational standards, course content, academic certificates, and enterprise experience certificates.

2) Interchange of human resources: Teachers participate in enterprise internships, transforming academic advantages into production advantages, engaging in production alongside students, identifying problems, and helping students apply what they have learned, thereby promoting the economic efficiency of enterprises; enterprise mentors guide school teachers to improve their operational skills, providing the knowledge and production standards required for courses, and adjusting course content as needed to meet enterprise requirements; schools provide consulting services to solve technical problems for enterprises, and hire entrepreneurs and skilled masters as lecturers or career guidance teachers.

3) Mutual conversion of research achievements: School teachers and enterprise technicians collaborate on the research and development of new materials, technologies, processes, and products, improving the school's educational level and enterprise production efficiency; teachers understand the development of enterprise products, support talent cultivation and curriculum reform, improve integrated teaching plans, and promote student employment.

4.2. Sharing and Complementarity of Educational Resources

1) Establishment of professional teams for vocational competence cultivation: Establish a long-term and systematic school-enterprise cooperation model, transform internships into a process of practice-reflection-improvement, provide practice opportunities that match positions, reduce reliance on single production line practices, help students discover blind spots in their growth, address psychological concerns, and clarify career directions. Build internal and external practice bases, mentor expert teaching systems, strengthen ideological and political courses, cultivate students' dedication to their professions and craftsmanship spirit, integrate labor education into enterprise internships and practical training, and develop students' secondary skills.

2) Establishment of an innovative one-stop employment service platform: Build a high-quality teacher team, develop innovative training courses, strengthen industry-enterprise connections, and establish a government-school-enterprise symbiotic training system. Promote the construction of integrated production-education bases, establish studios in leading enterprises, integrate resources, develop employment service channels through school-enterprise collaboration, select cooperative enterprises, incorporate enterprise-recognized education into students' initial education, improve employment guidance service systems, conduct personalized professional training, and categorize student management.

4.3. Enhancing the Quality of Talent Cultivation

The core of industry-education integration lies in the cultivation and education of students. The significance of constructing a school-enterprise collaborative mechanism for talent cultivation lies in returning to how to cultivate excellent students, with the perspective of "holistic education." In the school-enterprise cooperation model, the positions of both enterprises and schools are equally important.

1) Establishing a hierarchical and classified student cultivation and management mechanism: When formulating student training programs, vocational colleges should pay attention to individual differences among students and further establish a management organizational system that adapts to the model of industry-education integration. Based on students' autonomous choices, diversified industry-education integration methods should be adopted to ensure that students of different types can find suitable positions in enterprises, truly achieving the diversification of students' learning goals and skill development. Students gradually enhance their core competencies in business practice, from understanding the enterprise and self-exploration to specialized practical training in internship positions, and finally signing employment agreements or contracts. Through different stages, they gradually grow into core technical talents within the enterprise.

2) Building a progressive "bringing enterprises into education" order-based capacity training model: To address the issue of high labor costs for enterprises caused by graduates leaving practical enterprises after graduation, a semi-work-and-study, order-based training approach can be adopted. The three parties of the school, enterprise, and students can sign intention employment agreements, match specialized training with enterprise positions, allowing graduates to be competent for core positions within the enterprise in a short time, improving their starting point for career development, and relieving enterprises of concerns about personnel recruitment.

4.4. Establishing an Achievement Evaluation System

1) Developing a comprehensive student-enterprise team competitive target assessment mechanism: In the practical production environment of enterprises, a student team assistance system should be established, with roles and responsibilities assigned to compensate for weak links among team members in practical production. This helps avoid students working aimlessly on their own just to complete tasks. During project implementation, emphasis should be placed on both process assessment and result assessment, with quantifiable evaluation indicators. Through comprehensive comparisons among students, teams, and disciplines, individual capabilities are encouraged to excel while strengthening teamwork.

2) Constructing an integrated evaluation mechanism with competitions driving learning: Throughout the teaching cycle, regular professional skills and vocational competency competitions are held to assess students' practical training outcomes in a professional manner. Industry experts are widely invited to participate in guiding evaluations and providing stage-specific advice for students' personal growth. Upon passing the assessment, students are awarded practice experience and professional competence certificates recognized by enterprises. By integrating cooperating enterprises into a network, local certificates are mutually recognized, ensuring that students' professional practical skills directly meet enterprise needs.

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