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# Analysis of the Value Connotation and Development Path of Practical Education in Vocational Colleges

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**Abstract:** Practice education is a new kind of educational mode in high vocational college, which is of practical meaning to enrich the connotation of educational system, to expand the methods of practical teaching and to innovate the measures of ideological and political work. This study discusses the value and connotation of practical education and analyzes the approaches to carry out practical education.

**Keywords:** high vocational college; practice education; value and connotation; approaches

## 1. The Development of the Connotation of Practical Education Concept in Vocational Colleges

The educational philosophy and connotation of vocational colleges are constantly evolving and changing with the times. In the 1980s, the development of university education work proposed the "three education model", namely "teaching and educating, managing and educating, and serving and educating". At that time, the management, cultivation, and service of students in higher education institutions were mainly based on the "three education" concept of ordinary universities. However, at the beginning of the proposal of the "three educations" concept, its connotation had certain limitations [2]. What is the definition of "higher vocational education", or what are the fundamental attributes that distinguish higher vocational education from other types of education? At that time, people's answers to this question seemed relatively vague [4].

The standardized development of higher vocational colleges has cultivated a large number of skilled professionals for China's socialist modernization construction and made important contributions to the popularization of higher education. After 2000, with the increasing demand for high skilled talents in society, the development of higher vocational education has received more attention. In 2006, Several Opinions of China's Education Ministry on Comprehensively Improving the Teaching Quality of Higher Vocational Education proposed to strengthen quality education, enhance professional ethics, and clarify training objectives. Among them, the fundamental task of higher vocational education is to adhere to the principle of educating people and prioritizing moral education. This provides guidance for the concept of cultivating talents in higher vocational education: further strengthen ideological and political education, and integrate the socialist core values system into the entire process of talent cultivation in higher vocational education.

In 2019, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities under the New Situation, proposing five basic principles for strengthening and improving ideological and political education in colleges and universities: (1) Adhere to the Party's leadership over colleges and universities. (2) Adhere to the socialist direction of education. (3) Adhere to the principle of educating people from all

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aspects throughout the entire process. (4) Adhere to the laws of education, ideological and political work, and student growth. (5) Persist in reform and innovation. The five basic principles have provided guidance for the ideological and political education work in vocational colleges. The requirements of "practical education", the combination of theoretical education and practical education, and the promotion of innovative ideas, content, forms, and methods in the third, fourth, and fifth principles provide theoretical guarantees for the concept of practical education in vocational colleges, and action guidelines for enriching the connotation and innovative work methods of students' ideological and political work in vocational colleges.

In 2019, the State Council of China issued Implementation Plan for National Vocational Education Reform, which pointed out that vocational education and general education are two different types of education with equal importance. The Plan affirms the important role and position of vocational education in China's socio-economic development, and further implements the talent cultivation plan for practical education in vocational colleges by promoting the integration of industry and education and the "dual" education requirements of schools and enterprises. Four requirements for vocational education: adhere to the integration of knowledge and practice, and the combination of work and study; Promote comprehensive and in-depth cooperation between schools and enterprises; Create a batch of high-level training bases; Take multiple measures to build a "dual teacher" teaching team. The development of higher vocational education requires that the proportion of practical teaching must account for more than half of the entire process of higher vocational education, emphasizing the importance of practicality in the cultivation of higher vocational college students and reflecting the significance of practical education in higher vocational education.

In summary, practical education in higher vocational education is a new requirement proposed based on the actual needs of social development. It is a talent cultivation model that emphasizes practical teaching in higher vocational education, an important education work that practices the important work of university education, and an important component of ideological and political work for higher vocational students.

## **2. The Important Value and Significance of Practical Education in Vocational Colleges**

### *2.1. Practical Education Is the New Era Connotation of "Three Educations"*

The development of vocational colleges in China has only been over 40 years. At first, there was no clear distinction between vocational colleges and regular higher education institutions. After the 1980s, the educational philosophy of vocational colleges was guided by the theory of "three educations", namely "teaching and educating, managing and educating, and serving and educating". Teaching and educating students "generally refers to full-time teachers serving as the main body of service, teaching professional knowledge in the classroom, helping students improve their professional abilities, and ultimately achieving the function of educating students professionally. The ideological and political work of students mainly relies on ideological and political courses, and the scope, influence, and effectiveness of ideological and political work are far inferior to the current concept of "big ideological and political work". Management and education refer to school administrators as the main body of education, achieving the educational goal of educating students through managing their behavioral norms. Service oriented education refers to the role of university logistics staff as service providers, providing services to students in public places such as canteens, dormitories, and libraries to achieve the goal of service oriented education.

The concept of "three educations" physically separates student service, education, and management, and fails to integrate the concept of comprehensive education. The teaching effect of talent cultivation is not ideal and has certain limitations. Teaching and managing education "also belong to the category of" serving education ", and this understanding is increasingly recognized because fundamentally, education and management

are also services. The expansion of the connotation of "service oriented education" has truly implemented the principles of educating all staff, all-round education, and whole process education in universities, promoting the continuous improvement of the quality and level of education in universities [2]. The rapid development of higher vocational education in China, combined with the actual requirements of social development, places more emphasis on the ideological and moral construction and all-round cultivation of students in talent cultivation goals. Thus, the concept of comprehensive education was born.

In 2006, Several Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Comprehensively Improving the Teaching Quality of Higher Vocational Education proposed that higher vocational colleges should adhere to the principle of educating students, prioritize moral education, and regard moral education as the fundamental task. Specifically, it is necessary to reform teaching methods and means based on "professionalism" and student characteristics, integrate "teaching, learning, and doing" into one, and strengthen the cultivation of students' practical abilities. Vigorously promote the integration of engineering and practical skills, highlight the cultivation of practical abilities, and reform the talent training mode. We will focus on reforming the talent cultivation model in higher vocational education, emphasizing the practicality, openness, and professionalism of teaching, and paying attention to the key links of experiments, practical training, and internships for higher vocational students. The role of practice in the cultivation process of vocational college students has been valued, and the work of educating students in practical teaching has also been given important significance.

In 2017, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities under the New Situation, which proposed that universities adhere to the principle of educating all staff, the whole process, and all aspects of education, and require the guidance of ideological values to run through the entire process and every link of education and teaching, forming a long-term mechanism for teaching, scientific research, practical education, management education, service education, cultural education, and organizational education. The Opinion enriches the connotation of university education, combines the actual situation of university education and talent cultivation goals, adds new requirements such as scientific research education, practical education, and cultural education, and emphasizes the comprehensiveness of the education subject and scope. According to the requirements of "professionalism" and "practicality" in the training objectives, practical education enriches the connotation of the concept of vocational education and is an innovation of vocational colleges in response to the new development of society in talent training objectives.

## *2.2. Practical Education Is an Expansion of Practical Teaching Methods in Higher Vocational Education*

Vocational education emphasizes practical teaching as the main focus, integrating students' ideological and political education into a large number of practical courses, internships, experiments, practical training, internships and other teaching processes, enriching the ways of ideological and political education, and expanding the means of cultivating vocational students. Practical courses exercise and enhance students' professional skills and "professionalism", while integrating ideological and political work into various aspects of practical courses. In short, vocational education should not only focus on practical teaching, but also emphasize practical education, professional skills, and ideological and moral education. Through practical teaching, we can cultivate new era vocational students who are both virtuous and talented.

Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities under the New Situation points out that ideological and political work in colleges and universities should adhere to the principle of educating all staff, the whole

process, and all aspects. According to the requirements of the whole process education in the "three pronged education", carrying out practical education in the process of practical teaching is of great significance for cultivating students in vocational colleges. According to the "Opinions", ideological and political work in universities should adhere to the principles of following the laws of education, ideological and political work, and student growth. Based on the practical situation of cultivating students in vocational colleges, the concept of practical education integrates ideological and political theory education into practical teaching, which conforms to the principle of "guiding ideological values throughout the entire process and every link of education and teaching", and is suitable for the development of ideological and political work among vocational college students.

Several Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Comprehensively Improving the Teaching Quality of Higher Vocational Education requires further strengthening ideological and political education, and integrating the socialist core values system into the entire process of talent cultivation in higher vocational education. Vocational college students have weak cultural foundations and low theoretical levels, making it difficult to effectively complete the arduous task of ideological education relying solely on classroom teaching. Therefore, the practical education model plays an important role in the ideological and political work of higher vocational education. In the process of practical teaching, it is important to pay attention to the integration of excellent values such as professional ethics, legal awareness, integrity, and dedication, and seamlessly connect them in order to improve the quality of vocational teaching, cultivate students' moral character, and cultivate high-quality skilled talents.

Vocational colleges are increasing their efforts in curriculum construction and reform, by strengthening school enterprise cooperation, establishing internship bases, and enhancing practical training, in order to enhance students' vocational abilities. Practical education enhances students' ideological and political level in the process of cultivating their vocational abilities, and enriches the teaching methods of higher vocational education. Practical education combines vocational education to enhance students' practical, creative, employment, and entrepreneurial abilities, fulfilling the goal requirements of socialist builders and successors with comprehensive development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, and aesthetics. It promotes the integration of ideological and political education with productive labor and social practice to highlight the cultivation of practical abilities, and expands the teaching mode of vocational education development.

### *2.3. Practical Education Is an Innovative Measure for Ideological and Political Education in Vocational College Courses*

College practical education is essentially guiding young students to take the correct path of growth that combines practice, aiming to cultivate talents with a sense of social responsibility, innovative spirit, and practical ability, and to cultivate socialist builders and successors with comprehensive development in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, and aesthetics [1]. Practicality is a key link in the cultivation of vocational talents, and carrying out practical education is an important part of ideological and political work in college courses. It is an important innovation in ideological and political work in vocational colleges, suitable for the development characteristics of vocational college students, and of great significance to the cultivation of vocational college students. Practice is the most important part of vocational courses. Conducting ideological and political education for students through practice is in line with the requirements of vocational education, and is a course ideological and political innovation work that combines training objectives and student characteristics to meet practical development needs.

According to the Implementation Plan for National Vocational Education Reform issued by the State Council of China, talent cultivation in vocational colleges is a "dual" education model that promotes the integration of industry and education through practi-

cal courses. Firstly, the "dual" education requires the establishment of a modern apprenticeship education system, joint research and development of talent training plans by schools and enterprises, timely incorporation of new technologies, processes, and standards into teaching standards and content, and strengthening student internships and practical training. Secondly, the "dual" education requires vocational colleges to actively cooperate with qualified enterprises in talent cultivation, technological innovation, employment and entrepreneurship, social services, cultural inheritance, and other aspects based on their own characteristics and talent cultivation needs. Thirdly, the "dual" education requires the establishment of a high-level vocational education and training base that integrates practical teaching, social training, real production of enterprises, and social technical services, based on policy advantages and the joint establishment of learning and enterprise resources for resource sharing. Fourthly, the "dual education" requires the construction of a "dual teacher" teaching team, improving the teaching ability of teachers in theoretical and practical courses, and better carrying out theoretical and practical teaching.

The "dual" education model requires both schools and social enterprises to jointly educate students. According to the needs of social development, schools utilize the social resource advantages of enterprises, and leverage the practical advantages of enterprises to share resources, complement advantages, and jointly educate students. In general, the "dual" education model has four requirements for the cultivation of vocational college students: adhering to the integration of knowledge and practice, and the combination of work and study; Promote comprehensive and in-depth cooperation between schools and enterprises; Create a batch of high-level training bases; Take multiple measures to build a "dual teacher" teaching team. From the perspective of the reform requirements of vocational education mode, the integration of knowledge and practice, the combination of work and study, school enterprise cooperation, practical training bases, and "dual teacher" teachers all emphasize the combination of theory and practice, which is in line with the talent training plan and objectives of higher vocational education. The "dual" education model is a theoretical guidance for the ideological and political teaching mode of practical education in vocational colleges. So, utilizing the practical advantages of enterprises to carry out practical education is an innovation in exploring the teaching mode of higher vocational education.

Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities under the New Situation require the promotion of reform and innovation in ideological and political work in colleges and universities. Ideological and political work should be based on the actual situation of the school, in line with the ideological reality of teachers and students, and with an innovative and practical work spirit, in order to do a good job in ideological and political work in universities. Vocational colleges, based on the advantage of high proportion of practical teaching, utilize the school enterprise cooperation and collaborative education model, practical teaching bases, social organizations and other practical training and internship systems to strengthen practical curriculum education, organically integrate ideological education into practical courses, complete ideological education work in practical courses, and carry out professional skills training while completing student ideological and political education. Starting from the high proportion of practical courses in vocational colleges, and based on the characteristics of vocational college students and the requirements of ideological and political work reform and innovation in universities, practical education has truly achieved the goal of starting from the actual situation, seeking truth from facts, and innovating the ways of ideological and political work in vocational colleges. This has certain practical significance for effectively carrying out ideological and political education in vocational colleges.

### **3. Exploration of Practical Education Path in Vocational Colleges**

The "three pronged education" requires a comprehensive education model. As a mode of education in higher vocational education, practical education also emphasizes

comprehensive ideological and political work, taking into account all factors comprehensively and coordinating all forces. Based on the actual characteristics of vocational education development, the following practical education paths are worth studying.

### *3.1. The Practical Educational Concept of "Integration of Industry and Education, Integration of Engineering and Technology"*

Through the practical education model, it is necessary to establish the talent cultivation concept of "integration of industry and education, and integration of work and technology", prepare for the construction of practical education work, and establish a platform for implementing ideological and political work. Vocational colleges should avoid the outdated concept of "going it alone", improve the system of enterprise participation, and provide various forms of support for the construction of public training bases that combine production and teaching functions" [6]. Vocational colleges should go out and understand the demand for talents in the market, collaborate with qualified enterprises to jointly study talent training plans and cultivate students. Enterprises grasp the most intuitive requirements and standards for talents in the market, and have industry backbone technical strength. Schools should actively explore talent development goals based on feedback from enterprise employment standards, promote school enterprise cooperation in education, develop talent development plans that meet market demand, and jointly cultivate talents that meet market demand; The school should invite enterprises to come in, hire professional skilled personnel to guide practical teaching on campus, and take on the task of teaching professional practical courses, bringing the requirements and standards of the industry's "frontline" to the school; Schools should encourage professional teachers to exercise and enhance their professional practical abilities, vigorously cultivate a "dual teacher" teaching team, send professional teachers to participate in business activities on the front line of enterprises, integrate into the industry, and understand the current situation of the industry; Schools should take the initiative to build a professional practice platform for students, providing them with a large number of opportunities for enterprise internships, internships, and fixed position internships. They should delve into their positions, combine practical learning, and continuously improve their professional abilities; Schools should take the initiative to improve the cooperation system between enterprises and enterprises, such as enterprise participation in talent cultivation and professional teacher visits to enterprises for training, based on the actual situation of education. They should innovate and support the construction of public training bases that combine production and teaching functions, providing guarantees for students' practical ability improvement.

### *3.2. The Concept of "All Staff, Whole Process, and All-Round" Practical Education*

The "Three Comprehensives" education is one of the basic principles for strengthening and improving ideological and political work in universities under the new situation, and it is an inherent requirement for vocational colleges to implement the fundamental task of cultivating morality and talents in the new era and to do a good job in vocational education [3]. Through the "Three pronged Education" model, we will promote the implementation of practical education concepts for all staff, throughout the entire process, and in all aspects. Class teachers, professional teachers, management personnel, logistics personnel, part-time social teachers, and students themselves all participate in practical education work, jointly creating a good "practical environment" such as dormitories, training rooms, campus environment, social practice activities, community volunteer services, etc., to enhance the effectiveness of education in the practical process; From classroom theoretical teaching to practical training, and then to enterprise internships, on-the-job internships, and pre job training, especially the process of students' practical learning in enterprises, it is necessary to comprehensively implement student ideological and politi-

cal education and do a good job in student ideological and political work. Through extensive practical processes, students' practical abilities are enhanced, ultimately promoting the development of their comprehensive abilities; Focusing on students comprehensively, caring about their learning, life, emotions, interests, aspirations, and physical and mental health. Paying attention to student issues and relationships with students' emotions is beneficial for stabilizing their emotions and cultivating their positive mentality and thinking. It is important to focus on students' practical experience, which is a critical period for students to enter internship positions from school and a transitional period towards society. Adaptation to society can cause ideological fluctuations and affect students' development. Therefore, providing comprehensive services to students and guiding them to better adapt to the practical learning environment can truly promote their development.

### *3.3. The Education Team Should Be "Student-Centered" and Wholeheartedly Serve Students*

Vocational colleges should adhere to the people-oriented concept, prioritize student training work, and wholeheartedly do a good job in student service. Putting students first "means insisting on making students and their development the central link of educational work, doing a good job in student service and management, and truly implementing the fundamental task of cultivating morality and talents. To enhance political standing, the focus should be on students' "moral character", guiding them to develop noble values, attaching importance to students' ideological and political work, and making education work the central task. Through ideological construction, students' ability and quality development should be promoted, and professional talents with comprehensive development in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor should be fully cultivated. We should pay close attention to the ideological characteristics and spiritual needs of students, and carry out sustained, continuous, systematic, and targeted ideological and political education [5]. Based on the individual development needs of students, a comprehensive education plan that meets the all-round development of vocational college students is formulated through improving talent training programs, management services, practical activities, cultural environment, and other practical aspects. To expand the practical education classroom, innovate the ideological and political education methods, extend ideological and political education beyond the classroom, establish a "big ideological and political" education concept of "classroom+practice", "on campus+off campus", and "online+offline" multi-faceted practice, focus on student development, comprehensively pay attention to students' ideological status, construct a practical education model that promotes student development, provide comprehensive services and guidance, cultivate students well, and promote their all-round development.

### *3.4. The Education Model Should Emphasize Practicality and Promote Practical Education*

The ideological and political education model that emphasizes practicality means abandoning the traditional classroom education, enriching the ideological and political education and human resources outside the classroom, and carrying out student ideological and political work on a good practical education platform to promote the development of education work. Vocational colleges should create practical education models that are in line with their own development, student characteristics, and industry needs, and expand their educational paths. To truly promote practical education, it is necessary to coordinate various educational forces, implement institutional guarantees, and ensure the development of practical education models; We must start from the five aspects of "morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor", expand the unified platform of ideological and political classrooms, professional courses, practical courses, and social activities, and coordinate the efforts of schools, society, enterprises, and families as multiple educational entities; It is necessary to effectively integrate ideological and political education with professional teaching work, match the school's connotation construction with industry standards, and carry out synchronous knowledge imparting, skill cultivation,

and value guidance; It is necessary to adapt to the comprehensive development needs of students, equip students with "mentors" for ideological and political work, participate in student management services, professional development, career planning, delve into students' actual situations, understand students, and timely promote the development of ideological and political work; It is necessary to create a good cultural environment, where cultural individuals can subtly convey China's excellent culture and socialist core concepts to students, and promote student education through improving the practical environment.

#### 4. Conclusion: Future Prospects of Practical Education Mode in Higher Vocational Education

Practical education is an important component of the comprehensive education model, an important mode of cultivating vocational college students, and an important path for carrying out ideological and political work for vocational college students. Practicality and professionalism are important attributes of vocational college student training work, and also important basis for social industries to cultivate students' quality and ability. The development of vocational colleges must aim to cultivate high-quality talents that meet market demand, and integrate ideological and political work into the process of cultivating students' practical and vocational abilities. Based on the characteristics of students and social requirements, create a practical education model that is in line with the school's own development. In the development of higher vocational education, some good educational models have been summarized, such as the "three in one integration" model of Wuhan Transportation Vocational College: ideological mentors entering the college, vocational mentors entering the class, and quality mentors entering the club, comprehensively promoting the organic integration of the first and second classrooms of college students [3]. For example, the "Five Entries and Five Refinements" model of Jiangsu Tourism Vocational College [5]. Practical education is a mode of carrying out ideological and political work, and innovating more models that are conducive to the development of vocational colleges based on their own characteristics has certain practical significance.

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