Research on the Path of Production-education Integration Majoring in Cross-border E-commerce in Higher Vocational Colleges

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ABSTRACT. After analyzing the background and connotation of the production-education integration, the article takes Alibaba Digital Trade College of Wuhan City Polytechnic as an example to illustrate the path of production-education integration majoring in cross-border e-commerce.

Keywords: Cross-border e-commerce; Production-education integration; Path

In January 2019, the State Council issued the National Vocational Education Reform Implementation Plan (No.4, 2019) (hereinafter referred to as Article 20 of Vocational Education) pointed out that “Vocational education and general education are two different types of education and have the same important status.” The positioning of vocational education in China is once again clear, and the important position of vocational education is highlighted. Vocational education should take the cultivation of talents needed by the industry as its own duty, which is the inevitable requirement for vocational education.

1. The Proposal of Production-education Integration in Recent Years

Since the beginning of the reform and opening up, China’s relevant views on the production-education integration have generally gone through the stages of “combination of industry and education”, “combination of work and study”, “school-enterprise cooperation” and “integration of industry and education”. In recent years, our country has issued a series of policies and documents related to the reform and development of vocational education. For example, in 2019, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the Education Modernization in China in 2035, in which they proposed to promote the organic connection and deep integration of vocational education with industrial development. In the same year in the Article 20 of Vocational Education, the State Council put forward to promote the
“dual education” through production-education integration, adhere to the knowledge-action unity and the combination of work and study and promote the in-depth cooperation between schools and enterprises. In 2018, Ministry of Education issued the Measures for Promoting School-Enterprise Cooperation in Vocational Schools, in which it emphasized to promote the joint education mechanism through production-education integration, school-enterprise cooperation, work with study, and knowledge-action unity. After careful combing, it is found that the production-education integration has become a long-term strategy for the development of national vocational education.

The introduction of the above series of policies, on the one hand, expounds the close relationship between vocational education and industry. On the other hand, it also clarifies the path of deepening the reform of vocational education in China. Just as required in the Education Modernization in China 2035, we should “promote the organic connection and deep integration of vocational education and industrial development”.

2 The Connotation of Production-education Integration

Literally the production-education integration is the integration of “production” and “education”, which can be further expanded to the integration of “enterprises” and “colleges”, and then rise to the integration of “industry” and “talent”. The connotation of the production-education integration can be grasped from the following three levels.

2.1 To understand the production-education integration at the cognitive level

“Production” is “industry”, and the main subject is various enterprises; “teaching” is “education”. In China, the education type closely related to industry is vocational education, mainly represented by vocational colleges. Considering the long-term development, enterprises take the initiative to participate in or undertake some social welfare activities to gain their status and influence in the industry, which is one of their motives to cooperate with vocational colleges. If an enterprise can further realize the importance of school-enterprise cooperation and production-education integration to its development, its initiative and enthusiasm of cooperation will be greatly enhanced.

Vocational colleges are the main subjects to cultivate high-quality technical talents, and the talents supply must be accurately connected with the talents demand of enterprises, which means that vocational colleges must cooperate with enterprises to cultivate talents. After decades of development of vocational education in China, the development path of vocational education has gradually become clearer. The concept of running school-enterprise cooperation and production-education integration has been rooted in vocational colleges, but also firmly rooted in the field of vocational education.
2.2 To implement the deep production-education integration on the practical level

Ultimately, the implementation of production-education integration depends on the both sides, namely “enterprises” and “colleges”. The production-education integration is the road of cooperation recognized by both sides, so both sides will naturally uphold the idea of win-win cooperation to promote the deep integration. On the practical level of the production-education integration, the industrial college has become the first choice of many vocational colleges. Wu Xianrong (2018) believes that the industrial college is an important carrier and realization form of the production-education integration in higher vocational colleges, and plays a very important role in cultivating high-quality technical talents[1]. Yang Yinghui (2018) believes that the development model of the industrial college provides a good path for the smooth implementation of the production-education integration[2]. Lu Kunjian (2017) believes that the industrial college is an important measure to deeply promote the institutional innovation and development of the production-education integration[3].

2.3 To pay attention to the accurate matching between “industry” and “talent” at the development level

Whether in industry or vocational education, we must adhere to the road of high-quality and sustainable development. There are many factors affecting industrial development, among which high-quality technical talents are one of the core factors. At the same time, enterprises have realized that the cultivation and supply of talents mainly rely on vocational colleges, so the willingness to cooperate with vocational colleges is becoming increasingly strong.

The construction of higher vocational colleges in China has generally gone through several stages from model vocational college, core colleges to high-quality schools, and then to high-level higher vocational schools and professional construction plan with Chinese characteristics (referred to as “Double High Plan”). During the period, the cooperation between schools and enterprises has developed from the combination of “production” and “education” to the integration of “production” and “education”, and vocational colleges have always adhered to the development road of matching talents supply and industrial demand.

3 The Path of Production-education Integration in Cross-border E-commerce Major

In 2020, our school and Alibaba.com jointly established the first Alibaba Digital Trade College (Hereinafter referred to as Trade College) in Hubei Province. Under the guidance of the general framework of the school-enterprise cooperation agreement, Trade College adheres to the basic idea of “dual education”, undertakes talents training, and actively explores the implementation path of deep production-education integration in cross-border e-commerce.
3.1 Comprehensively promote the curriculum integration of 1+X Certificate System

Article 20 of Vocational Education clearly proposes to “launch the pilot work of 1+X Certificate System”, “encourages vocational college students to actively obtain academic certificates while obtaining various certificates of vocational skill level, so as to expand employment and entrepreneurship skills, and to alleviate structural employment problems.” The integration of curriculum and certificates is the primary task for higher vocational colleges. At present, the cross-border e-commerce major is carrying out B2B Data Operation in Cross-border E-commerce (Hereinafter referred to as B2B), developed by Alibaba.com. With this as the starting point, Trade College has formulated a separate professional talents training program and integrated the vocational skill level standard into it.

According to the professional talents training program of Trade College, the cross-border e-commerce major has started the “Foundation of Cross-border E-commerce” in the second and third semesters, and the “Cross-border E-commerce Practice” in the fourth semester. On the basis of the orderly connection of the professional core courses, the assessment contents of B2B is organically integrated with these two courses. After a systematic study and practical training, students can participate in the assessment at the end of the fourth semester. Furthermore, for the students who fail, Trade College provides two choices. They can choose to participate in the offline learning and practical training of the next grade, or choose “Teachers’ Online Q&A+Independent training” to prepare for the re-assessment.

With the full implementation of the pilot work of 1+X Certificate System, the pilot work of various certificates of vocational skill level related to cross-border e-commerce has also started. Trade College can take this opportunity to further explore the multiple paths of the integration of production and education.

3.2 Jointly build teaching staff based on the production-education integration

First of all, give full play to the advantages of teaching staff. School teachers have strong professional quality and skills, solid theoretical foundation, and rich teaching experience. However, they lack the practical experience of enterprises, which is the advantage of enterprise lecturers. As the elites of enterprises, they are with rich practical experience, familiar with the internal operation rules of the industry, but what they lack is the teaching skills at school. Teachers working together can effectively make up for their own deficiencies.

Secondly, the apprenticeship is adopted to build teaching staff. Enterprise training by school teachers and enterprise lecturers’ teaching in class are the normal working methods of the apprenticeship. Trade College can also appropriately organize some competition activities, such as teaching skills competition for enterprise lecturers, KPI and platform operation competition for school teachers, etc., so as to continuously promote teachers to improve their professional level.
Finally, incentives are developed to encourage teachers to actively transform themselves. For school teachers, double teacher quality can be set as the priority in special projects, such as position competition, continuing education and training, application for teaching and research projects, etc. Meanwhile they can be encouraged to practice full-time enterprise train by providing policy preferences. For enterprise lecturers, Trade College can formulate some feasible incentive measures, such as job promotion, performance reward, paid leave, etc.

In addition, school teachers whether to obtain relevant certificates of vocational skill level, enterprise lecturers for teacher certification, mandarin certificates, teaching ability competition certificates, etc., has become the KPI to Trade College from school. To a certain extent, it has been promoting the transformation of teaching staff at school.

3.3 Jointly build and share productive practical training base

Cross-border e-commerce enterprises are characterized by large platform operation investment, different operation rules and fast update, which makes it difficult for the on-campus training base of cross-border e-commerce major to meet the training requirements of students. Nowadays, Trade College is rich in industry resources, covering the main industry chains, including the operation accounts of each platform, industrial chain resources, etc. These industry resources can be shared with cross-border e-commerce majors, providing students with good productive practice conditions and resources for practical training.

Alibaba.com, as a cooperative enterprise of Trade College, has an important influence in the cross-border e-commerce for several years. Relying on all kinds of projects, Trade College provides students with start-up funds, technical support, resource recommendation and other financial aid to help students practice. This not only expands the channels of practice and training, provides students with preferential business conditions for entrepreneurship, but also reserves a large number of talents for the business expansion of Trade College.

With the in-depth development of Trade College, it can build a number of productive practical training bases in Wuhan and surrounding places with the help of Alibaba.com, so as to provide a variety of choices and guarantees for students’ practice and training.

3.4 Encourage enterprises to participate in the enrollment guidance actively

The importance of enrollment work of higher vocational college is self-evident. Trade College should attach importance to it in thought, and participate in the enrollment publicity work in action.

In the annual enrollment publicity season, Trade College can lead and organize enterprise lecturers to participate in it, giving full play to the industry background advantages of enterprise lecturers. Every year when graduates from high school or
secondary vocational school visit the school, Trade College can arrange enterprise lecturers to be responsible for the reception and answer questions to create a close publicity and display opportunity. Trade College can conduct special enrollment publicity lectures online or offline to introduce the industry background, development prospects and trend analysis of enterprise employment, so that students can have more understanding of the cross-border e-commerce industry and have more expectations for their career planning.

Trade College can also conduct enrollment publicity training for the school’s enrollment officers, dean of teaching-researching section and so on so that they can accumulate some industry background and do better in the school’s enrollment publicity work.

4 Conclusion

The development and reform of vocational education in China is increasingly close to the sustainable development of society, the optimization and upgrading of economic structure, and the iteration and renewal of industry. Vocational education must deepen the production-education integration, promote the organic connection of education chain, talent chain and industrial chain, and comprehensively improve the quality of human resources.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS. This research was financially supported by Hubei Provincial Department of Education for Research on the Integration of Talents Training Program and 1+X Certificate System Majoring in Cross-border E-commerce in Higher Vocational Colleges (2020883).

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