

# Exploring the Path and Method of Creating the "Golden Course" of Vocational Education

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**Abstract.** This paper analyzes the difference between "water course" and "golden course", and puts forward the path and method of creating "golden course" in vocational education, aiming at the characteristics of "golden course", which can be used for reference in the construction of vocational education "golden course".

**Keywords:** water course; golden course; vocational education; path; method.

## 1. Introduction

In the recent period, the topics of "water course" and "golden course" have become the focus of attention of the whole society. The cause of the incident was that in June 2018, the relevant person in charge of the Ministry of Education of China proposed to strengthen undergraduate education in China. All colleges and universities should focus on undergraduate education and truly turn the "water course" into a deep, difficult and challenging "golden course", [1] In August 2018, the Ministry of Education of China issued the "Notice on the Implementation of the Spirit of the Undergraduate Education Work Conference of the National Higher Education In the New Era", further clarifying that all colleges and universities should comprehensively sort out the teaching content of each course, eliminate the "water course", create a "golden course", and effectively improve the quality of course teaching. [2] As a result, "golden course" was first written into the Ministry of Education document.

Under the background of the national revitalization of undergraduate education and the comprehensive creation of the "golden course", can vocational colleges stay out of the game? In fact, vocational colleges, as an important force in the training of technical and skilled talents and applied talents, are the main bearers of vocational education in China, the problems and manifestations of the "water course" in undergraduate education also exist in vocational education. Compared with undergraduate schools, there are obvious disadvantages for vocational colleges in many aspects, such as talented personnel, teacher ability, capital investment, teaching facilities, student quality, etc. In fact, the problem of "water course" in vocational colleges is often more serious than that of undergraduate schools. It is more difficult to improve the quality of teaching in vocational colleges, and it is difficult to solve the problem in a short period of time. In the long run, the quality of vocational education will be deteriorating. On the one hand, graduates are in difficulty in employment because they are unable to meet the job requirements of enterprises. On the other hand, many enterprises urgently need employees but they do not have suitable employees and there is a shortage of labor. If this structural imbalance between supply and demand cannot be reversed as soon as possible, it will not only make the goal of vocational education impossible, but also make vocational education face a crisis of survival and endanger the real economy and social development. Therefore, it is not only necessary but also urgent to create a "golden course" for vocational education.

## 2. Analysis of "Water Course" and "Golden Course"

The term "water course" does not have a strict academic definition, but the term "water course" has a long history. The "water course" is not only considered by scholars to be a worldwide ill-health of university general education, [3] even in the field of professional education, it is not uncommon, and it is increasingly intensified. The survey of college students shows that students take the courses in which "teachers are easy-going, high points are given, and they can learn easily" as "water courses", while the "water courses" are often sought after by students. [4] One study found that college students

generally consider courses with repetitive content, courses that are not taught professionally by teachers, and those that are too simple to be considered as "water courses". [5] Instead, demanding courses are not welcomed by students. In addition, in recent years, schools have adopted a system of student evaluation teachers. The level of student evaluation has a direct impact on the evaluation of teachers, which leads to "those demanding and difficult courses are often abandoned by students, forming a vicious circle" [6].

Investigation on the incentives for "water courses" often fails to pay attention to issues like not-in-place teaching, indifference towards learning, disengagement at learning and derailed curriculum system where courses are either overly professional or overly general. [3] Some scholars believe that from the perspective of teaching effects, the "water course" of vocational colleges is not only reflected in the content, but also in teaching principles and teaching methods.

What is the "water course"? What is the "golden course"? Director Wu Yan of the Ministry of Education of China explained that: "Water course" is a low-level, old-fashioned class, a lesson that teachers do not have to mind, and students do not care. The "golden course" has high-level, innovative and challenging skills. It requires students and teachers to take a jump to get it. Teachers should spend their time and energy to prepare lessons. Students should spend more study time and thinking time in class and after class.

Director Wu Yan pointed out that the curriculum is the core element of talent cultivation. Although it is a micro problem in education, it is the most fundamental problem of education. The curriculum is the "last mile" that reflects the concept of "student development as the center". It is a shortcoming, bottleneck, weakness and key issue that is common in Chinese universities. To this end, the Ministry of Education is required to do a good job in the implementation of the first-class curriculum "Double Thousand Plan" construction, to build 10,000 national and 10,000 provincial first-class online and offline quality courses as a traction, to create a large number of national "golden course" and provincial "golden course." The types of "Golden courses" mainly include five types: offline "golden course", online "golden course", online and offline hybrid "golden course", virtual simulation "golden course", and social practice "golden course". Regarding the construction of the "golden course", some experts pointed out that it is necessary to complete three transformations: teacher-centered to student-centered transformation; examination-centered to learning-centered transformation; and discipline-centered to professional-centered transformation. [9]

As for how to eliminate the "water courses", a large number of research literatures have already elaborated from different perspectives and on different subjects. This article will not repeat. In short, the cause of the "water course" is complicated, showing that the curriculum reform has entered the deep-water area. In fact, the curriculum problem may only be the appearance, which reflects the deep-seated problems in the process of education reform, so the creation of the "golden course" is a systematic project.

### **3. How to Create a "Golden Course" for Vocational Education**

#### **3.1 To Create a "Golden Course" for Vocational Education, We Must Reform the Talent Evaluation and Teaching Evaluation System**

Some media pointed out: To create a "golden course", it is necessary to reform the talent evaluation and teaching evaluation system in colleges and universities, change the tendency of only scientific research and only papers in talent evaluation, attach importance to scientific research but not to teaching, open up the promotion channel of teaching-oriented professors, guide college teachers to truly attach importance to teaching from the bottom of their hearts, take teaching and educating for pleasure, and let teachers who devote themselves to educating get due respect and recognition. [10]

In addition, in the process of creating a "golden course" for vocational education, all parties must participate, and establish the concept that everyone is a "golden course" builder, avoiding the misunderstanding that building a "golden course" is only a frontline teacher's work task. In recent years, the teaching reforms of various vocational colleges have been steadily advanced, and the achievements have been obvious to all. However, there is a phenomenon that cannot be ignored. It is

the fact that frontline teachers generally reflect that the routinely administrative and repetitive work not related to teaching makes them exhausted. Coincidentally, a senior professional teacher also wrote an article calling for “vocational education needs to return to common sense, return to the classroom, return to students” and propose that “vocational education cannot rely solely on administrative drive” [11]. It is gratifying that the education administration has noticed this problem. Minister of Education Chen Baosheng proposed at the National Education Work Conference in 2019 that this year it is necessary to take the burden reduction for teachers as a major event. [12] This provides an institutional guarantee for the creation of the “golden course” of vocational education.

To evaluate the "golden course" of vocational education, it is necessary to change the traditional evaluation method. It is necessary to use the improvement of students' ability and literacy instead of the test score as the basis for judging the effectiveness of learning and learning. The system of evaluation of teaching must be reformed to make it more scientific. At the same time, the content of learning should reflect the combination of professional education and general education. It should be changed from professional learning to professional group learning to adapt to the cross-border development of various industries and the reality of multidisciplinary integration.

### **3.2 To Create a "Golden Course" for Vocational Education, Requiring Teachers to have a Vision of the Era of Artificial Intelligence and Change Their Minds**

Today, emerging technologies such as mobile Internet, Internet of Things, big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence are advancing with each passing day. They have gradually penetrated into every corner of society. Human beings have entered the era of artificial intelligence, bringing overall and fundamental changes to the whole society. And this change is epoch-making, fundamental, and thorough. New technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence have far-reaching impacts on social economy, politics, culture, and life, and will bring unprecedented innovation and challenges to the development models and decisions of all walks of life. For example, an important measure to promote the transformation and upgrading of traditional manufacturing industries is machine substitution, and a large number of traditional jobs will be replaced by artificial intelligence technology. With the closer integration of education and new technologies, the traditional teaching model has undergone holistic and fundamental changes, including educational content, educational forms, education management, ways of thinking, learning behavior, teaching evaluation, etc., all are affected by new technologies. The purpose of creating a "golden course" is to adapt to the new changes of the times and promote the all-round development of students' ability. This will effectively eliminate the problem of structural imbalance between supply and demand. As emerging technologies will eliminate a large number of traditional jobs, they will generate a large number of new jobs. New positions require talents with high-level, innovative and challenging ability, which is also a requirement for the construction of “golden course”.

### **3.3 Creating a “Golden Course” for Vocational Education Requires a Large Number of “Golden Masters” as a Guarantee**

At the National Education Conference in September 2018, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: "The teacher is the engineer of the human soul, the inheritor of human civilization, carrying the knowledge, spreading ideas, spreading the truth, shaping the soul, shaping life, shaping new people. The times and the entire society should carry forward the social customs of respecting teachers and teaching, and strive to improve teachers' political status, social status, and professional status, so that teachers can enjoy the social prestige they deserve, and make new and greater contributions to the cause of the party and the people in teaching and educating. "This important discussion once again demonstrates the importance and urgency of the construction of the teaching staff. Teachers are the decisive external factors and conditions for the development of students. Therefore, it takes a large number of “golden teachers” to create a “golden course”. The key to building a “golden course” is teachers. Therefore, the construction of teachers' faculty is the fundamental guarantee for creating a "golden course" for vocational education. The characteristic of vocational education is to pay attention to the skill training of talents. The teaching content is based on the first-line production and

practical application. It requires teachers to have dual-master quality, and it can be said that it is both a teacher and a coach, so as to achieve the goal of training and applying skill-based talents. The construction of vocational education "Golden course" has greatly improved the requirements of teachers' ability and quality. Teachers need to continuously strengthen self-learning and practice the concept of lifelong learning to meet the requirements of teachers in the new era. Practice has shown that by introducing talents and informatizing training for existing teachers, it can effectively improve the skill level of the vocational education teachers.

### **3.4 To Create a "Golden Course" for Vocational Education, Students Should be the Mainstay, Teachers Should be the Leader, and Wisdom Education Should be Practiced**

Teaching activities are a task decided and completed jointly by both teachers and students. Without the efforts of any party, teaching can't achieve the desired results. In the era of artificial intelligence, the guiding ideology of student learning should be changed from the teaching of knowledge to the cultivation of ability. Therefore, it should be changed from teacher-centered to student-centered, but the teacher's dominance cannot be ignored. The moral education elements in the curriculum and the cultivation of students' humanistic qualities are one of the reasons why the role of teachers is indispensable. The design of the teaching mode of flipping classrooms and mixed education, along with the use of information teaching tools, reflects the teachers' leading role. Teachers must uphold the concept of professional people doing professional things, guide students to learn how to learn and achieve adaptive learning; teachers should teach students the concept of lifelong learning, teach students in accordance with their aptitude, conduct personalized teaching, and practice wisdom education. The so-called wisdom education is guided by the modern education concept, with the modern education system as the guarantee, using information technology to optimize the innovation of resource allocation, learning environment, teaching content, teaching methods, education evaluation and education management process, through data orientation for learners providing a rich and differentiated learning experience to truly realize the individualized development of each student on a common basis. The core goal of wisdom education is to make students more intelligent, and education informatization is the main means of wisdom education.

### **3.5 To Create a "Golden Course" for Vocational Education, We Must Pay Attention to the Construction and Application of Online Learning Space**

In the process of informational teaching, hybrid teaching has become the mainstream teaching mode. Under the background of educational informationization, the hybrid teaching method combining online teaching and offline teaching has become a topic of common concern in the education field. Especially 90 generation as the first generation of network aborigines, there is a high acceptance of mixed teaching. Teachers complete the teaching activities online to design and guide and help students, students improve their online learning, teachers and students in the online system to achieve a variety of teaching interaction. With the hybrid teaching mode, teachers extend the teaching behavior from the classroom to the outside of the classroom, and students can learn independently within the network coverage, thereby improving learning efficiency and learning effects. In this process, the online learning space serves as a platform to strengthen communication and communication between teachers and students after class, and plays an important role in promoting the reform and development of education and teaching. In January 2019, the Ministry of Education issued the "Guiding Opinions on Strengthening the Construction and Application of Network Learning Space", [13] the notice pointed out that it is necessary to use cyberspace to break through the boundaries of classroom time and space, and implement project-based teaching, inquiry-based teaching, and mixed teaching, use the cyberspace for learning evaluation and problem diagnosis, carry out differential and personalized teaching and guidance, promote education fairness, and improve the quality of education.

## 4. Summary

Vocational education has different characteristics and requirements from undergraduate education, including the construction of double-qualified teachers, project and task-oriented course structure design, learning effectiveness evaluation standards, cultivating students' self-learning ability, and how to adapt to the new requirements brought by the wide application of emerging technologies. Creating "golden course" of vocational education is an important opportunity and challenge facing vocational education at present. Teachers engaged in vocational education need to face up to the challenges of the new era, grasp the means of information teaching and adopt new teaching mode. Through the construction of "golden course", teaching activities will be implemented in a way that teaching and course quality is constantly improved, so that an ideal effect will be reached and the fundamental goal of teaching will be achieved.

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