



Thoughts on the Solutions to Problems in Vocational Education of the New Age

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Abstract

Vocational education is an indispensable part in China's educational system as well as an important basis of its national economy and social development. Therefore, it is a necessary tendency to strive to develop vocational education in order to deepen China's reform in educational system and to realize the sustainable development of its education. However, due to the conflicts between China's current educational pattern and its market economy, some problems have arisen, harassing the development of vocational education. Accordingly, it is urgent to solve the current problems in China's current vocational education through the joint efforts of all the society.

Keywords: Solution, Vocational education, Problems

Currently, in an important period of constructing a well-off society in an all-round way and creating a new situation in building socialism with Chinese characteristics, it plays a vital role in improving the overall quality of Chinese professionals in different fields to cultivate an array of professionals with outstanding skills by strengthening our talent development. In addition, it is also a fundamental way to be adapted to China's optimization in industrial structure, improve creativity and competitiveness as well as to conduct the strategy of building up our country with talented people. Due to its particular importance in cultivating professionals with supreme skills, vocational education must be attached great importance to. When conducting the strategy of developing our country relying on science and technology as well as that of building up the country with talented people, we are expected to be based on a conception that vocational education and economy are closely related to each other. Accordingly, great efforts should be made to improve China's vocational education to a more advanced level by combining the two.

1. Strengthening the Sense of Duty and Urgency in Developing Vocational Education

First, it is an urgent need of improving China's comprehensive competitiveness by relying on science and technology to develop vocational education. In order to promote the urbanization and industrialization as well as to construct modern manufacturing bases, an array of technicians and laborers with practical knowledge and professional morality are needed. With the in-depth development of China's reform and opening, it seems increasingly difficult to get adequate employees for industrial parks all around China. The shortage of farmer workers, or technicians more exactly, provides a good opportunity to develop China's vocational education as well as drives higher requirements on it. Accordingly, more attention should be paid to this field in order to strengthen China's comprehensive competitiveness and sustainable development.

Second, it is also an important channel to coordinate the development of urban and rural areas and construct new socialist countryside to develop vocational education. The fundamental way out for agriculture lies in the improvement of laborers' quality. When we push forward the construction of new socialist countryside, on one hand, extra labor force in the countryside should be introduced to non-agricultural fields, cities or towns for employment; on the other hand, more efforts should be made to develop modern and effective agriculture as well as industrialized operation. All these must be based on the improvement of country laborers' overall quality, hence calling for the development of vocational education through which agriculture can be related to science and technology. Gradually, farmers' cultural level as well as ability to earn a living will be improved.

Third, it is a significant measure to develop vocational education in order to fulfill the scientific outlook on development as well as to construct a harmonious socialist society. In spite of the current golden period for China's

development in social economy, it suffers from some obvious contradictions, among which employment seems to be a particularly serious issue related to the people's livelihood and social harmony. At present, contradictions exist both between labor force supplies and demands and in employment structure. On one hand, a great number of idle people and graduates are not fully employed; on the other hand, enterprises are lacking in useful technicians, especially skilled workers. In order to solve that, vocational education should be fully developed to improve laborers' qualifications, turning employment pressure into advantages in human resources. In this sense, the development of vocational education means that of practical advanced productive forces. Economic development and social stability can be achieved with such development.

Last, it is also a tendency for more profound reform in the educational system as well as the overall and sustainable development of the educational cause to develop vocational education. Actually, vocational education serves as an indispensable part in China's educational system and even an important basis for national economy and social development. Just like the role of general higher education in cultivating academic and engineering professionals, vocational education is mainly focused on technical and skilled ones. There is no class distinction between the two. Accordingly, we must replace the outdated idea that vocational education is the second-rate education with the new one that anyone with skills needed at the job market is useful. In addition, fair chance of education should be given to everyone through the reform in educational system in order to provide room for a variety of talents to exert their capacities.

2. Facing up to Difficulties and Problems in Current Vocational Education

With the joint efforts of the whole society for so many years, China's vocational education has achieved rapid progress, forming a complete vocational education system together with general education and adult education. Up to now, China's secondary vocational education has expanded scales, higher educational standard, higher teaching quality with its steady development. In addition, with its attention to social economy and service for the countryside, a lot of practical skilled persons have been cultivated, hence improving Chinese laborers' professional quality as well as skills. What's more important, Chinese governments and departments at all levels are putting more importance to vocational education and intensifying legislation and its implementation, which provides a favorable environment for its further development. However, we have to realize that there is still a wide gap between the current situation of vocational education with the demands of social economy in China. Some obvious problems are as follows: too much importance is attached to general education and academic education instead of vocational education and training throughout the society; the inflexible education mechanism is divorced from the adjustment of economic structure and market demands and education quality and profit need improving; there are still defects in the present vocational educational system due to which resources are not optimized and employed reasonably; vocational education is in shortage of funds to improve its poor facilities for teaching and experiments; specialty setting is far from reasonable and lacking in special features, hence failing to form special or leading majors; there is no reasonable staff structure in which there is a severe shortage of professional teachers and double-qualified teachers; due to the great difficulty in enrolling students, a lot of vocational education resources have run off; it's hard for their graduates to find a job. Based on the above problems, we should face up to the difficulties and problems confronting China's vocational education, be keenly aware of the importance of vocational education in the process of constructing a well-off society in an all-round way and strengthen the sense of urgency and responsibility to improve vocational education.

3. Developing Vocational Education Conforming to Market Economy

Different from general education, especially compulsory education, vocational education, combining public welfare with industry, is the most dynamic and reform-welcoming area as well as the most flexible one to explore. In order to be adapted to the development of our economic society, we must have our ideas updated to pursue development through reform and innovation.

3.1 Converting Ideas and Emphasizing Specialties in Vocational Education

First, the outdated education ideas have to be changed. The principle of "taking service as the objective and employment as the guidance" should be stuck to convert the former planned vocational education to the one based on market, during which government's role is changed from direct management to macro control and the teaching objective is employment-oriented instead of examination-oriented. In addition, quality education must be conducted in an all-round way, in which vocational characteristics have to be given priority to and teaching activities should be closely related to production practice, technological introduction and social services to emphasize the cultivation of practical skills. The demands of enterprises and society should be fulfilled when establishing teaching objectives and choosing teaching materials. In short, guided by market demands and aiming at cultivating intellectual, skilled and compound talents, our vocational education will not be separate from actual employment. Second, the current cultivation pattern should be converted as well. Joint education can be relied on by combining schools and enterprises to develop "order form education". Accordingly, cultivation plans should be laid down to develop practical talents needed by industrial development conforming to employment demands. In other words, whatever major demanded by the

market should be set up and whatever talents demanded should be cultivated. Industrial development and the construction of industrial parks should be taken into full consideration to establish talent bases for them. Meanwhile, the former education pattern focusing on class teaching should give way to a combination of practice and learning. An open-minded education idea should be established concerning teaching pattern, education experience, teacher selection and employment and so on. We should have more cooperative activities with enterprises, universities and research institutes with broader ranges and higher levels. Third, the social conduct of “every profession producing its own topmost master” should be encouraged and more contests should be organized to show students’ learning achievements and skills, hence improving the reputation of vocational schools throughout the society and therefore opening up more fields for students’ employment. Besides, adequate guidance should be given to students to establish their right senses of education, talents as well as employment to call for more support for vocational education.

3.2 Strengthening Employment-oriented Principle and Improving Vocational Education Quality

To begin with, guided by market, we should further clarify the orientation of vocational education and make great efforts to improve its connotation and specialty. Due to its closest, most direct and extensive relations with economic society, vocational education is expected to meet the demands of the strategic adjustments of economic structure, not to be isolated from market and economy and to explore market demands. In order to achieve that, the ideas of running an enterprise should be employed to conduct vocational education according to which market investigations should be fully carried out to predict the tendency of changes in market demands for labor force and therefore to improve the pertinence of our education. Teaching resources should be allocated according to actual employment demands. The cooperation between schools and enterprises should be encouraged to conduct “order form” training and certificate system to qualify the trainees with one certificate to show their professional skills, hence providing more useful talents for the development of China’s regional economy. In addition, we should seize the opportunity of constructing new socialist countryside to develop vocational education intended for the countryside in order to cultivate new-style peasants with knowledge, skills and operation capacities. Second, the construction of some key specialties should be strengthened. In order to be adapted to the adjustment of China’s industrial structure, vocational schools should enhance their communication with every possible department, industry and enterprise throughout the society to accumulate information about the labor force market in order to develop some potentially-required specialties beforehand by analyzing and predicting the change rules of the labor force market and adjusting their specialty arrangements accordingly. Importance should be attached to the establishment of some demonstration specialties and some leading ones by adjusting specialties and course setting at proper time. Specific demands for skills at different positions have to be taken into consideration in order to establish advantages in specialty, quality as well as employment. Let’s take health vocational schools as an example, the construction of some specialties, such as nursing, pharmacy, laboratory medicine, marketing, dentistry and ophthalmology, must be strengthened. Third, more efforts should be made in the construction of training bases with special characteristics to exert their roles in education, training, occupational skill evaluation and technical service and so on. It will become the highlight of vocational education to cooperate with enterprises and industries in establishing training bases to improve students’ practical skills. Fourth, staff construction has to be improved. Personnel reform should be conducted in vocational schools to conduct post appointment system, open selection of administrators, competition system for posts and so on to establish and perfect an effective incentive system. Besides, according to the demands for talent cultivation and specialty adjustment, plans to improve vocational teachers’ quality should be laid down to organize staff training, especially that of the backbone teachers, to enhance the training on teachers’ professional skills and practical abilities by establishing and perfecting the teaching quality assessment system and to encourage teachers to pursue their study for relevant degrees to improve their teaching standards and academic levels, enhance their practical abilities and improve their teaching quality. Meanwhile, we should try to construct double-qualified staff by encouraging and supporting professional teachers to have training courses on other specialties to be equipped with compound skills, hence improving vocational teachers’ overall quality and professional skills.

3.3 Deepening the Reform in Vocational Education Guided by Market

The reform in vocational education must be social and market-oriented in order to improve its correlation with the development of economy and society. First, the education guidelines laid down by the Party and state must be strictly followed to conduct quality education, to cultivate the educatees’ occupational ideals, occupational morality, occupational skills and entrepreneurship, to intensify their service-oriented sense and to cultivate high-quality labors and talents for production and service. Second, the present teaching system should be innovated from time to time with practice emphasized. Teaching activities should be closely related to production practice, social service, technological transfer and development. And new knowledge, technology, techniques and methods should be introduced to vocational education by reforming the present course setting and teaching contents. In addition, the credit system and an elastic education system should be encouraged to provide conditions for students to work their way through school, to work and study alternately or to complete their study in several phases. Third, the cultivation channels and teaching methods in vocational schools should be reformed to emphasize improving students’ practical skills and the employment rate.

Vocational education should be propelled to transfer from emphasizing students' professional quality to emphasizing their comprehensive quality, from emphasizing students' cultural and professional quality to emphasizing their creative and operation ability. In addition, moral education should be combined with technical education. Guided by market demands, based on specialty construction and focused on brand and special specialties, we should exert our advantages to promote the reform in course system in order to help our vocational schools form their own characteristics.

To sum up, it is a glorious but arduous mission entrusted by our era as well as an obligatory responsibility of vocational schools and educators to promote the reform and development of vocational education. In certain sense, the development of vocational education means that of the practical advanced productivity. Only with the reform and development of vocational education will the strategy of developing our country relying on science and technology as well as that of building up the country with talented people be conducted in a better way, human resources be developed faster, laborers' quality and abilities in employment and entrepreneurship be improved overall and the sustainable development of economy and society be promoted.

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